

LOUIS XIV *and*



LA GRANDE MADEMOISELLE

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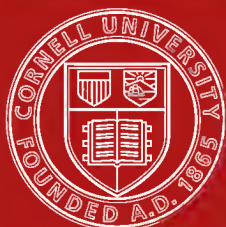
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MADemoiselle DE MONTPENSIER

She is holding the portrait of her father, Gaston D'Orléans
From the painting by Pierre Bourgnignon in the Musée de Versailles
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Louis XIV
and
La Grande Mademoiselle

1652-1693

By

Arvède Barine *compiling*

Author of "The Youth of La Grande Mademoiselle"

Authorised English Version

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PREFACE

IN the volume entitled *The Youth of La Grande Mademoiselle* I have tried to present the conditions of France during the period in which the ancient liberties of the people and the turbulent society which had abused its privileges suffered, in the one case death, in the other extinction.

As is always the case, a lack of proper discipline had prepared the way for absolute rule, and the young King who was about to assume full power was an enigma to his subjects. The nearest relatives of Louis had always found him impenetrable. The Grande Mademoiselle had been brought up side by side with her cousin, but she was entirely ignorant of his real character, knowing only that he was silent and appeared timid. In her failure to understand the King, Mademoiselle showed herself again a true child of her century.

At the moment in which the Prince assumed full power, his true disposition, thoughts, and beliefs were entirely hidden from the public, and Saint-Simon has contributed to this ignorance by prolonging it to posterity. Louis XIV. was over fifty when this terrible writer appeared at Court. The *Mémoires* of Saint-Simon present the portrait of a man almost old; this portrait however is so

powerful, so living that it obliterates every other. The public sees only the Louis of Saint-Simon; for it, the youthful King as he lived during the troubled and passionate period of his career, the period that was most interesting, because most vital, has never existed.

The official history of the times aids in giving a false impression of Louis XIV., figuring him in a sort of hieratic attitude between an idol and a manikin. The portraits of Versailles again mask the Louis of the young Court, the man for whose favour Molière and the Libertines fought with varying chances of success.

In the present volume I have tried to raise a corner of this mask.

The *Mémoires* of Louis XIV., completely edited for the first time according to any methodical plan in 1860, have greatly aided me in this task. They abound in confessions, sometimes aside, sometimes direct, of the matters that occupied the thoughts of the youthful author. The Grande Mademoiselle, capable of neither reserve nor dissimulation, has proved the next most valuable guide in the attempt to penetrate into the intimate life of Louis. As related by her, the perpetual difficulties with the Prince throw a vivid light upon the kind of incompatibility of temper which existed at the beginning of the reign between absolute power and the survivors of the Fronde.

How the young King succeeded in directing his generation toward new ideas and sentiments and

how the Grande Mademoiselle, too late carried away by the torrent, became in the end a victim to its force, will be seen in the course of the present volume, provided, that is, that I have not overestimated my powers in touching upon a subject very obscure, very delicate, with facts drawn from a period the most frequently referred to and yet in some respects the least comprehended of the entire history of France.

A. B.

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LOUIS XIV. AND LA GRANDE MADEMOISELLE

CHAPTER I

Exile—Provincial Life—Conversation at Saint-Fargeau—Sentiment towards Nature in the Seventeenth Century—Differences between Mademoiselle and her Father—Mademoiselle Returns to Court.

THE Fronde was an abortive revolution. It was condemned in advance, the leaders having never clearly known what ends they were seeking. The consequences of its failure proved to be of profound importance to France. The civil disorders existing between 1648 and 1652 were the last efforts of the French against the establishing of absolute monarchy, to the strengthening of which the entire regency of Anne of Austria had tended. The end of these disorders signified that the nation, wearied and discouraged, had accepted the new régime. The result was a great transformation, political and moral, so great that the Fronde may be considered as clearly marking a separation between two periods of French history—a deep abyss as it were between the times which precede and those which follow.

The leaders of the Fronde had been dispersed by the return of the King to his capital on October 21, 1652. When the exiles returned, some sooner, some later, the last after the Peace of the Pyrénées (November 7, 1659), so great a change had taken place in ideas and customs that more than one exile felt himself in a strange land.

It was necessary to adjust oneself to the new atmosphere. It was very much the same situation—though the Frondeurs were under much lighter accusations—as that experienced by the *émigrés* returning under the Consulate. The Princess, the events of whose heroic years have been related, offers an excellent example of this condition.

When the Grande Mademoiselle, who had urged on the civil war in order to force Louis XIV. into marriage with herself, obtained at the end of five years, permission to return to Court, she brought with her the old undisciplined habits which were no longer in fashion, and in the end incurred much that was disagreeable. Exile had not weakened her pride. According to a celebrated formula, she had learned nothing, she had forgotten nothing; she remained that person of impulse of whom Mme. de Sévigné said, "I do not care to mix myself with her impetuosités."¹

Far be it from me to reproach Mademoiselle! all honour be to her who stood firm in the age of servility which succeeded the Fronde! In other

¹ Letter of January 19, 1689.

respects exile had been most healthful for her. She had been obliged to seek in herself resources the finding of which surprised her. Mademoiselle naïvely admires herself in her *Mémoires*¹ for never having experienced a single moment of ennui "in the greatest desert in the world," and surely she deserves praise, as her first experiences at Saint-Fargeau would have crushed most women.

The reader will be convinced of this if he imagines himself in her company the night of arrival in the early days of November, 1652. At the end of *The Youth of La Grande Mademoiselle* we left her weeping without shame before her entire suite. Her dream of glory had evaporated. Anne-Marie-Louise d'Orléans would never be queen of France. She would take no more cities; pass no more troops at review to the sound of trumpet and cannon. Three weeks previous, the great Condé had treated her as a companion in arms. She rejoiced the soldiers by her martial carriage, and any one of them would have been not only surprised but very indignant if it had been suggested that she was capable of being almost as cowardly as her father, the "*triste* Gaston."

Now all that was finished, even the romantic flight. While playing hide-and-seek with imaginary pursuers, the Grande Mademoiselle had fallen into a state of physical and moral prostration. The heroine of Orléans and of Porte Saint-Antoine sobbed like a little child because she "had too

¹ *Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier*. Edited by Chéruef.

much grief" and was "too afraid"¹; the aspect of her future home had taken away the last remnants of courage.

The Château of Saint-Fargeau, begun under Hugh Capet and often repaired, particularly during the fifteenth century, seemed more like a fortress than a peaceful dwelling. Its heavy mass dominated the valley of the Loing, a region of great and dense forests, with few clearings. Itself enveloped with brushwood and protected by deep moats, the château harmonised well with the surroundings. Its windows opened at a great height above the ground, and its towers were strong. The body of the building was massive and bare, united by strong ramparts forming an *enceinte* irregular with severe appearance.

The *ensemble* was imposing, never smiling. Saint-Fargeau, long uninhabited, was almost a ruin filled with rats at the time when Mademoiselle presented herself as a fugitive. She was shown into a room with a prop in the centre. Coming from the palace of the Tuileries, this sight overwhelmed her, and made her realise the depth of her fall. She had an access of despair: "I am most unfortunate to be absent from Court, to have only a dwelling as ugly as this, and to realise that this is the best of my châteaux." Her fear became terror when she discovered that doors and windows were lacking. A report came from a valet that she was sought for imprisonment, and she was too confused to reflect

¹ *Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier*. Edited by Chéruel.



ANNE MARIE LOUISE D'ORLÉANS, DUCHESSE DE MONTPENSIER

From the enamel by Petitot in the South Kensington
Museum

that if the King had ordered her arrest locks would have been useless.

She continued her journey to reach a little château, situated two leagues from Saint-Fargeau, which was reported safer. "Imagine," says she, "with what pleasure I made the extra journey. I had risen two hours before daylight ; I had ridden twenty-two miles upon a horse already worn out with previous travel. We arrived at our destination at three in the morning ; I went to bed in haste." The crisis was short. The next day it was explained to Mademoiselle that Saint-Fargeau had two exits in case of alarm. She returned in consequence on the fourth day, and there was no more question of grief, nor even ill-temper ; from that moment the place was "good and strong."

The Princess adapted herself to the glassless windows, the broken ceilings, the absence of doors, and all the rest. The great ladies of the seventeenth century were fortunately not too particular. Mademoiselle encamped in a cellar while the apartment above was being repaired, and was forced to borrow a bed. She recovered all her gaiety before the comicality of the situation : "for the first cousin of the King of France." "Happily for me," wrote she, "the bailiff of the château had been recently married ; therefore he possessed a new bed." The bed of Madame the Bailiff was the great resource of the château. It was returned as soon as the Princess received her own from Paris, but it was again used to give a resting-place to the Christmas guests,

many of whom appeared—a fact to the credit of the French nobility—as soon as it was known where the illustrious unfortunate was passing her period of banishment.

Mademoiselle did not know how to provide for these guests and the most important were lodged with the bailiff. The Duchess of Sully and her sister, the Marquise of Laval, came together for a prolonged sojourn and performed the office of shuttle between the cellar in which the Grande Mademoiselle held her court and “the new bed of the city of Saint-Fargeau.” Ladies of quality arriving at this time lodged where they could with small regard to comfort, and this condition lasted until the château was put in order. Every one suffered but nobody complained. There was a certain elegance in this haughty fashion of ignoring comfort, the importance of which in our own days seems in comparison rather bourgeois, in the worst sense of the word.

Gradually all was arranged. The château was restored, the apartments enlarged.¹ The overgrowth of the approaches gave place to a terrace from which to the surprise of all a charming view was discovered. The Saint-Fargeau of the Capets and of the first Valois, “a place so wild,” says Mademoiselle, “that when I arrived, only herbs fit for soup were to be found,” became a beautiful residence, hospitable and animated.

¹ The Château of Saint-Fargeau still exists, but the interior has been transformed since a great fire which occurred in 1752; the apartments of Mademoiselle no longer remain. Cf. *Les Châteaux d'Ancy-le-Franc, de Saint-Fargeau*, etc., by the Baron Chaillou des Barres.

The mistress of the place loved open air and movement, as did all the French nobility before an absolute monarchy, in the interest of order and peace, had trained them to rest tranquilly in the salons of Versailles. Muscular decadence commenced with the French at the epoch when it became the fashion to pass the days in silk stockings and practising bows, under punishment of being excluded from all society. Violent exercises were abandoned or made more gentle.¹ Attention was paid only to what gave majestic grace to the body in harmony with the Versailles "Galerie of Mirrors."

The bourgeoisie were eager to imitate the people of quality, and the higher classes paid for their fine manners or their attempts at fine manners with the headaches and nervous disorders of the eighteenth century. The taste for sport has only reappeared in France during our own times. We are now witnessing its resurrection.

This taste, however, was still lively immediately after the Fronde, and Mademoiselle abandoned herself to it with passion. She ordered from England a pack of hounds and hunters. She possessed many equipages. With a game of marl before the château, indoor games for rainy days, violins from the Tuileries to play for dancing, it would be difficult to find a court more brisk, more constantly in joyous movement.

¹ Cf. *Les Sports et jeux d'exercice dans l'ancienne France*, by J. J. Jusserand.

Mademoiselle, whom nothing tired, set an example, and seasoned these "games of action" with *causeries*, some of which happily have been preserved for us by Segrain,¹ her Secretary of the Commandments. Thanks to him, we know, even admitting that he may have slightly rearranged his reports, what they talked about at the court of Saint-Fargeau, and one cannot fail to be somewhat surprised. He tells us all sorts of things of which we never should have dreamed, things that we have never imagined as subjects of interest in the seventeenth century. In this age which believed itself entirely indifferent towards nature, conversation nevertheless fell ceaselessly upon the beauties of landscape. People paused to admire "points of view," sought them, and endeavoured to explain why they were beautiful. The reasons given were, that those who knew how to enjoy a large forest and "the beautiful carpet of moss at the feet," actually preferred landscapes made more intelligible through the intervention of man. A desert pleased them less than an inhabited country, a wild landscape less than sunny collections of cultivated fields and orchards symmetrically planted, recalling "the agreeable variety of parterres made by the ingenuity of man."

Mademoiselle praises in her *Mémoires* the view

¹ LES NOUVELLES FRANÇAISES, ou *Les divertissements de la princesse Aurélie*, by Segrain, Paris, 2 vols., 1656-1657. The last of the "Nouvelles françaises," *Floridon, ou l'amour imprudent*, is the history of the intrigues in the harem which led to the death of Bajazet. Racine had certainly read it when he wrote his tragedy.

from the end of the terrace. She attempts to describe it and fails. Segrais also tries in vain. It was impossible at that epoch. The vocabulary did not exist which could furnish words to describe a landscape. The creation of our descriptive vocabulary is one of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's¹ greatest glories. In compensation, Segrais knew very well how to explain why the beauty of the view, about which he had so ineffectively written, pleased him and his companions. He said that, arranged by chance, it conformed to the rules of classic pictures and in no way appeared the sole work of nature. Neither the valley of the Loing nor the immense marsh which closed this side of the château, nor the island in the midst of this marsh, with clumps of trees, nor the church and small height which could be perceived, seemed placed without human intervention. "And this," writes Segrais, "is so well represented in those excellent landscapes of the great artists, that all who look upon it believe that they have seen the marsh, church, and little island in a thousand pictures."

Literature, imaginative literature at least, also held a considerable place in the conversation. Mademoiselle, who had read nothing before her sojourn at Saint-Fargeau, was anxious to make up for lost time. "I am a very ignorant creature," writes she, at the beginning of her exile, "detesting reading and having seen only the gazettes.

¹ See *Bernardin de Saint-Pierre*, in the Collection of Grands écrivains. Paris, Hachette.

Henceforth I am going to apply myself and see if it be possible to like a thing from deliberate determination."

Success surpassed her hopes; she conceived a passion for reading. In the winter of 1652-1653, during which there were few distractions, and the château was given over to workmen; when the bad weather and the rough roads rendered Saint-Fargeau unapproachable, and left the castle solitary, she read, or listened to reading while plying her needle, without being bored.

I laboured from morning till night at my work and descended from my chamber only to dine or to be present at mass. The winter weather was so bad that walking was impossible. If there ever was a moment of fine weather I rode, or if the ground was too frozen I walked a little to watch my workmen. While I sewed some one read to me, and it was at this period that I began to love reading as I have done ever since.

At the end of some years of banishment her "erudition" struck Dr. Huet, who met her at the baths of Forges. "She loves history passionately," says he in his *Mémoires*, "but above all, romances, so-called. While her women were dressing her hair, she desired me to read aloud, and no matter what the subject, it provoked a thousand questions on her part. In this I well recognised the acuteness of her mind."

The fashionable romances easily pleased a Princess who had a grandeur of soul and loved to meet it in others. They were the works of

Gomberville,¹ of La Calprenède, and of Mlle. de Scudéry, in which the sheepfolds and dove-cotes of l'Astrée had yielded to the heroic adventures and grand sentiments of princes warlike and proud, who, notwithstanding their exotic names, were the same who resisted under Richelieu, and lead the Fronde under Mazarin. The generations born in the first third of the century were charmed with the resemblance to their own heroes which these tales offered them. They went wild with delight over Scythe, Oroondate, or the Grand Cyrus, as they were fascinated with Saint-Preux and Lelia, and many readers remained faithful till death to these writers who had so well expressed the ideals of their youth.

At sixty, La Rochefoucauld re-read La Calprenède. Mme. de Sévigné was a grandmother when she found herself "glued" to *Cléopâtre*. "The beauty of the sentiments," writes she, "and the violence of the passions, the grandeur of the events, and the marvellous successes of the redoubtable swords, all enchain me as if I were still a little child. The sentiments are of a perfection which satisfy my conception of beautiful souls."²

Realism and Naturalism have in the present day destroyed the capacity for enthusiasm for heroes of romance. One's imagination can hardly be kindled

¹ His *Polexandre* had appeared, 1629-1637; his last romance, *La Jeune Alcidiade*, in 1651; *Cassandre* and *Cléopâtre*, by La Calprenède, in 1642-1647. *Artamène, ou le Grand Cyrus*, by Mlle. de Scudéry, was published 1649-1653.

² Letters of the 12th and 15th of July, 1671, to Mme. de Grignan.

by a Coupeau or a Nana, nor even by a Madame Bovary, whatever may be the literary value of the works in which they figure. For the little court of Saint-Fargeau it was hardly possible to speak calmly of the favourite heroes. One day, followed by a numerous assemblage, Mademoiselle drove in the fresh valley of the Loing and descended from her chariot under the tall willows which bordered the little river. It was spring and the sun was radiant. The new grass and the growing leaves offered a picture so "laughing" that nothing else could at first be spoken of. While walking, the conversation finally turned upon romance, and each fought for the favourite hero. The discussion was waxing warm when the Princess, who had hardly spoken, intervened to moderate its ardour. After avowing that she had read but little, she gave an eulogium upon Roman history, or rather what it might become, better comprehended in the hands of a learned writer, and criticised the custom of giving French manners to Greeks, Persians, or Indians.

Mademoiselle desired greater "historic truth" and what might be designated as more local colour. Why not frankly take characters from French contemporaries? "I am astonished," she said in ending, "that so many people of intelligence who have created for us such worthy Scythians and such generous Parthians have not taken the same pleasure in imagining as accomplished French cavaliers or princes : whose adventures would not have been less

pleasing." After a moment's silence, objections were advanced. The idea of writing a romance upon the "war of Paris" seemed very daring. One young lady very naïvely urged that the author would not know how to name his characters. "The French," said she, "naturally love foreign names. Arabaze, Iphidamante, Crosmane, are beautiful names; Rohan, Lorraine, Montmorency, are nothing of the kind."

The old Mme. de Choissy, with the authority given by her noted intelligence, tried to prove that in an imaginative recital both time and space must be distant. One Marquise appeared wearied of the kings and emperors of romance, and desired heroes taken from the middle class. Another, Mme. de Mauny, who was supposed¹ to have invented the expression "*s'encanailler*" asserted that it was forbidden to heroes of romance to do or say anything derogatory to pure sentiment, which was possible to those of "high birth only." Mademoiselle maintained the necessity of observation and truth for the tale, but she admitted that the author of a great romance, writing as a "poet," had the right to imagine events, instead of servilely copying them. "The tale," said she, "relates things as they are, the romance as they should be."

This distinction neither lacks acuteness nor a certain justice, and we should like to know how much Segrais had contributed to it. No one having replied to this last remark, the Princess remounted her carriage, and gave the order to follow

¹ See *Le dictionnaire des Précieuses*, by Somaize.

the pack of hounds, which had just started a hare a few steps off. She was obeyed, in spite of the obstacles which the country presented, and she returned to the château, very well satisfied with her afternoon.

At Saint-Fargeau they talked more frequently of love than of either literature or the beauties of nature. Love is a subject of which women never weary, and about which they always have something to say. Mademoiselle lent herself completely to such conversation ; it was she who one day posed a question the subtlety of which the Hôtel Rambouillet might have enjoyed. " Whose absence causes the greater anguish, a lover who should be loved or one who should not be ? "

She consented to admit the ideas of l'Astrée upon the fatality of passion, on the condition that the effects should be limited to personages of romance, or in real life to those of humble birth. Segrais makes her say without protest in a tale¹ ascribed to her " Man is not free to love or not to love as he pleases." In the depths of her soul, in her most intimate thoughts, Mademoiselle had never been further from comprehending love, never had she more energetically refused for it any beauty, any grandeur. One of her ladies, the gracious Frontenac, with her eyes " filled with light," had made a marriage of inclination, an act absurd, base, and shameful in the judgment of Mademoiselle, her mistress. The marriage turned out badly. M. de

¹ *Eugénie, ou la force du destin.*

Frontenac was eccentric. His young wife at first feared, then hated him, and at Saint-Fargeau there passed between the couple tragi-comic scenes, of which no one could be ignorant.

Mademoiselle had just commenced her *Mémoires*.¹ She eagerly relates the conjugal quarrels of M. and Mme. de Frontenac with more details than it would be suitable to repeat, and this was the opportunity for an outburst against the folly of trying to found marriage upon the most fickle of human feelings. She writes :

I have always had a strong aversion for even legitimate love. This passion appears to me unworthy of a noble soul ; but I am now confirmed in this opinion, and I comprehend well that reason has but little to do with affairs of passion. Passion passes quickly, is never, in fact, of long duration. One may be unhappy for life in entering upon marriage for so transient a feeling, but on the other hand, happy if one marries for reason and other imaginable considerations, even if physical aversion exists ; for I believe that one often loves more with this aversion conquered.

The principle may be sage, but the Grande Mademoiselle is too sure of her fact. This "even if aversion exists" is difficult to digest. The Princess was nearing her thirtieth year, when she treated love with contempt, and nothing had yet warned her of the imprudence of defying nature ; so she believed herself well protected.

In the spring of 1683, the rumour had spread

¹ Mademoiselle commenced her *Mémoires* shortly after her arrival at Saint-Fargeau. She interrupted them in 1660, resumed them in 1677, and definitely abandoned them in 1688, five years before her death.

that she and M. le Prince de Condé had promised to marry, in the expectation and hope of being soon relieved of the Princess de Condé, now a hopeless invalid, and that the imagination of Mademoiselle, for lack of heart, pressed her "furiously" in this affair. The Parisian salons had discovered no other explanation for the hostile attitude which she persisted in maintaining towards the Court of France, which she had so much interest in conciliating. It was inconceivable that without some reason of this kind she should compromise herself as she did, for a Prince who had become an alien and whom she might never again see. Why betray news through letters which always fell into the hands of Mazarin? Why leave to Condé, now a Spanish General, the companies raised under the Fronde with the funds of Mademoiselle and bearing her name? Either she had lost her senses or one might expect some romantic prank, which could only be unravelled by marriage.

"Have you told everything?" demanded Mademoiselle of the old Countess de Fiesque, her former governess, one morning, when this last poured out the comments of the world. "No," said the good woman. Her mistress let her proceed, then expressed herself as indignant that she should have been believed capable of marrying on account of a sudden passion; the other reproaches had not touched her.

She declared that M. le Prince had never spoken of marriage, that it would be time to think of this

if Madame la Princesse should die, when M. le Prince should be pardoned, when he should formally demand her hand, and the King should approve the affair.

I believe [continued she] that I should marry him finding in his personality only what is grand, heroic, and worthy of the name I bear. But that I should marry like a young lady of romance, that he should come to seek me upon a palfrey destroying all barriers in the road; and on the other hand that I should mount another palfrey like Mme. Oriane¹; I assure you this would not suit my temper, and I am very indignant against those people who have thought it possible.

At this point the Princess was silent. It would have been the moment to confess the true key to her conduct; but one must avow that, in spite of her fine words and her expressed contempt for lovers, she was after all a true Princess of romance, led by her imagination.

The idea of making war upon the King from the bottom of a cellar had amused her, and still more the thinking of herself as the price of peace between her cousin and Condé, and she had not wished to look further.

While the tempest gathered over her head, the great preoccupation of Mademoiselle was the installation of a theatre in her dilapidated château, in which the country workmen had not yet succeeded in arranging a suitable bedroom for her. She could no longer live without the comedy; the theatre must come first. It was ready in

¹ Oriane was the mistress of Amadis.

February, 1653, and inaugurated immediately by a wandering troop, engaged for the season. The hall was commodious, but very cold. The court of Saint-Fargeau descended from its garrets entirely muffled, the ladies in fur hoods. The country people, only too delighted to be invited to shiver in such good company, hastened from distances of ten leagues. Mademoiselle was perfectly contented: "I listened to the play with more pleasure than ever before."

We no longer understand what it means to love truly the theatre. According to the gazette of Loret, the opening piece was a pastoral, "half gay, half moral." Mademoiselle loved this sort, slightly out of fashion; Segrais has preserved an agreeable reminiscence of a summer's evening passed in the forest, with the natural background of high trees, listening to an ancient "Amaryllis" repolished and arranged for the stage by some penny-a-liner.

Mademoiselle loved, what is more, everything pertaining to the theatre from tragedy to trained dogs. One reads in a little squib written by her as a pastime,¹ and printed for the diversion of her friends, "Comedians are essentials—at least for the French and Italians. Jugglers, rope dancers, *buveurs d'eau*, without forgetting marionettes and bell players, dogs trained to leap, and monkeys as examples to our own; violins and merry-andrews and good dancers." This skit should not be taken

¹ *La relation de l'Isle imaginaire*, printed in 1659, also *L'histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie*. We shall again refer to them.

too seriously, but it well accords with the account left us by an eye-witness of one of the representations at Saint-Fargeau. The piece was called *Country Pleasures*, an operetta. The greatest applause fell neither to the Goddess Flora, nor to the "melancholy lover," but to two children disguised as monkeys, and executing songs with the "cadence which belongs to those animals."

Twice a week, the pleasures and cares of Saint-Fargeau were varied by the arrival of messengers bringing letters and gazettes. News not to be trusted to the post was received through guests from Paris or by special messengers. The news consisted mainly of political events, but it fell to the exiles to discover the springs and to draw the morals from the facts. This talent of divining, possessed in a high degree by the Parisians, has never passed the *banlieue*. It cannot be carried away.

Mademoiselle herself had never attained the art. Even at the Tuileries she used to say: "I can never guess anything." Once in her place of refuge, she comprehended nothing of the real significance of passing events. For those who were not Provincials there was nothing clearer than the conduct of the Court of France, after its return to the capital. Mademoiselle had fled from the Tuileries October 21, 1652. The next day the young King held a *Lit de Justice*, in which the Parliament was forbidden to occupy itself with the general affairs of the kingdom. Banishments and pursuits

immediately commenced, but the gazettes hardly referred to them. From their pages one might have gathered that Paris was entirely absorbed in its pleasures.

The post of November brought to Saint-Fargeau description of the first Court ball and some lines on a new *Lit de Justice* (November 13th), in which the Prince de Condé and his adherents had been declared criminals “de lèse majesté.” The December number of the *Gazette* gave news of the arrest of Retz, who had rallied before the end of the Fronde, and the account of a great marriage with enumeration of gifts and names of donors, exactly as in our modern journals. The January number was made interesting by the accounts of the several successes of Turenne over Condé and the Spanish troops, and by the news of the death of an ancient aunt of Mademoiselle who had been in retreat for seven or eight years. The necrological article took a larger space in the gazette of Loret than that absorbed by the warlike and political news together.

The third of the following month the revolutionary era was closed by the triumphal return of Mazarin. Louis XIV. travelled three leagues to meet him,

*Encor qu'il fait un temps étrange
Temps de vent, de pluie et de fange,*

and took him back in his own carriage to the Louvre, where a sumptuous festival, fireworks, and homage, more or less sincere, from the crowds of courtiers, awaited him.

The attention of the Parisians was at once directed to a grand ballet with mechanical devices and changes of scene, danced three times by the King and the flower of his nobility,¹ before a public analogous to that of the free representations of July 14th in Paris. Places were reserved for the Court and its guests, who really made part of the spectacle, but otherwise all entered who desired. The crowd besieged the doors to see what will probably never again be witnessed: a monarch sufficiently sure of his prestige to dare to pirouet, costumed as a mythological divinity, or stagger as a thief who had drunk too much, before the *canaille* of his capital.

The following day, a journalist bitterly bewails in his paper having seen nothing at all, although he had stood in line three hours and waited eight hours in the hall. This journalist exacted and obtained consideration; at the second representation, the chronicler before carelessly treated was lead in ceremony to the "reserved places." He was not yet content, not being in front. He showed himself, however, a good fellow and wrote an article admiring all, even a scene in which the joke to-day seems somewhat inhuman. It was a dance of cripples, the contortions of these miserable beings causing much laughter.

Of the abuses which gave rise to the Fronde, no living soul breathed a word. Not one of these

¹ These representations took place in the grand hall of the Petit Bourbon, near the Louvre. (Cf. *L'Histoire de Paris*, by Delaure.)

abuses had disappeared. For the most part they had been aggravated by the general disorder; but France resembled an invalid who had so far found only charlatans for physicians; it was weary of remedies. "The people of Paris," wrote André d'Ormesson, "were disgusted with Princes and did not longer wish to feed upon war."

One might say the same of the Provinces. They remained for the most part troubled and miserable, their hate now turning against the nobility, with whom the four years of anarchy had brought back the manners of the feudal brigands. Deceived on all sides, betrayed by all its pretended saviours, the country began again to put its faith in the central power. It was only necessary that this last should regain its strength day by day, and it was clear to the Parisians as well as to the Provinces that the first use royalty would make of convalescence would be to cripple the nobility so that a revival of the Fronde would be impossible.

The period had passed in which the King could be aided by the nobles according to their own methods not his, as at the time in which they had fought against him, to deliver him from his first minister. Louis XIV. wished now to be served in his own way, which was to be obeyed, and he felt the strength to impose obedience. It required all the naïveté of Mademoiselle to be able to imagine that she could make the King as an old Frondeur admit the distinctions between M. le Prince whose success one had the right to desire, and the Spanish

soldiers led by this same Prince in whom one must not be interested. She had so little realisation of the change which had taken place in sentiments, from the date of her exile, that she did not even attempt to conceal her grief at the news of the victory at Arras brought back by Turenne, August 27, 1654.

The Grande Mademoiselle believed herself in accord with her King and country when she wrote in her *Mémoires*: "I have not desired the Spaniards to gain advantage over the French, but I do wish that M. le Prince might do so and I cannot persuade myself that this is against the service of the King." It was then four months since the young monarch had entered, whip in hand, into his Parliament and forbade it to mix itself with his affairs; but his cousin had no more comprehended this warning than the others which had preceded it. It had not once occurred to her that the cadet branches of the royal family were amongst the vanquished and that the relations of the King of France, very far from being in a position to dictate to him, would henceforth be the most strictly held in leash of all his subjects. Only the approach of the great revolution gave them an opportunity to regain their importance and we know how much Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette were able to congratulate themselves over this fact.

Monsieur Gaston undertook to bring his daughter to a realisation of the truth. It had been said that as long as he lived bitter experiences would

come to Mademoiselle through this dangerous Prince.

Gaston d'Orléans had disappeared from the stage at the end of the Fronde, like a true hero of comedy. His wife said, half weeping, half laughing, that he seemed to her a Tewlin, a celebrated comic actor who filled the rôle designated to-day as the "king of operetta."

The return of the Court to Paris had been announced to the Luxembourg by a letter from Louis XIV. This news had entirely upset Monsieur and he blustered with so much appearance of truth that Mademoiselle had once more been convinced. "He was so completely beside himself," relates de Retz, "that one would judge from his manner of speaking, that he was already on horseback, completely armed and ready to cover with blood the plains of St. Denis and Grenelle."

Madame was terrified; she endeavoured to pacify him, but the more she tried the more vigorously he threatened to annihilate everything. His martial ardour vanished when he received a decree of banishment (October 21, 1652). It was at the date the King was entering Paris, and cannon were heard on all sides, the populace, according to the custom of the times, firing in the air as a sign of joy. Nothing, however, could persuade Monsieur, old Parisian as he was, that these charges did not come from the King's guards, and that the palace was not being besieged.

He was overcome with terror; moved to and fro



CARDINAL DE RETZ
Showing him in his Coadjuteur days
After the painting by Deveria

with agitation ; sent constantly to inquire what was going on, and finally hastened his departure, which should not have taken place till the next day before dawn. He drew a free breath only upon arriving at the valley of Chevreuse. No one dreamed of retaining him—on the contrary, Mazarin, who governed France from the depths of his exile, was resolved to have no more trouble with him. “Let his Royal Highness depart with his appanage,”¹ wrote he. His Royal Highness having arrived at the Château of Limours, Michel Le Tellier, Secretary of State and War, hastened to find him, and it was a repetition of the former scenes with Richelieu.

In his final adieus to public life, Gaston d'Orléans denounced Retz as before he had denounced Chalais, Montmorency, Cinq-Mars, and many others. When he had said all that he wished, thus preparing the arrest of the Cardinal, who was to astonish Mademoiselle by arriving at Saint-Fargeau, the King permitted him to retire to Blois.”² Monsieur obeyed with ill-grace ; he felt that they were burying him alive.

This was not the first time that he had dwelt at Blois in spite of himself. The forced sojourn made at that place under Louis XIII. had not been disagreeable, constraint aside, because he was not definitely limited, and he succeeded, being young and gay, in living like “a little king of

¹ Letter of October 12th, to the Abbé Fouquet.

² *Mémoires de Montglat.*

Yvetot." He had rebuilt according to his own taste (1635-1638) a portion of the château after the plans of François Mansard, "the cleverest architect of his times,"¹ the uncle of the builder of the Palace of Versailles.

Chambord served him for a country-seat, near at hand, and fruitful for the kitchen garden, with forests teeming with game for hunting-grounds, and amiable people for subjects, who had guarded a monarchical faith and considered themselves much honoured when the brother of the King deigned to flatter them and their daughters.

Saint-Fargeau was steep and gloomy; Blois, on the contrary, with its sky full of caresses, showed itself the worthy forerunner of the Angevine gentleness:

Coteaux rians y sont des deux côtés,
Coteaux non pas si voisins de la nue,
Qu'en Limousin, mais coteaux enchantés,
Belles maisons, beaux parcs et bien plantés,
Près verdoyants donc ce pays abonde,
Vignes et bois, tant de diversités
Qu'en croit d'abord être en un autre monde.²

It is a tourist of the time who so speaks, La Fontaine, who visited Blois in 1663, and described it to his wife in a letter half prose, half verse. The city had charmed him on account of its beautiful situation and the amiable manners of its in-

¹ *Mémoires du Marquis de Sourches*. Cf. *L'Histoire du château de Blois*, by La Saussaye.

² Letter of September 3, 1663.

habitants: "Life is very polished here, possibly has always been so, the climate and the beauty of the country contributing to its charm; probably the sojourn of Monsieur or the number of pretty women has caused this politeness."

As a man of taste, La Fontaine had admired the portion of the château of Francis I., without regularity and order; as a good liver he had appreciated the excellent breakfast at the inn. As a good traveller, he had gossiped sufficiently with the people of the place to realise how happy they were under the gentle reign of Gaston.

The traces of the civil wars had been quickly effaced in these fertile and populous provinces. La Fontaine gaily retook his route towards Amboise; he saw the smile of France, and he was made to enjoy it.

In this first time of peaceful enjoyment one of the great pleasures of Monsieur was to pass through his domains as an idle prince; descending here from his carriage to chase a stag, stopping there his boat to dine upon the grass, inviting himself into any dwellings belonging to either nobles or bourgeoisie in which he found pretty women.

He embarked one day on one of those covered boats which the pictures of the seventeenth century show us. They were called "galientes," and were used in voyaging upon rivers and canals. "Monsieur," relates an eye-witness, "had commanded a second boat in which he put a quantity of provisions, and the officers of his *ménage*, those of the

kitchen as well as the wardrobe ; the horses were led along the bank."

He took ten or twelve of his suite with himself, and when he reached some beautiful and agreeable island he disembarked and ordered dinner and supper to be served under the shade.

"Certainly one might say that all cares were banished from our society, that life went on without restraint, playing, drinking, eating, sleeping at will, that time meant nothing ; at last the master, although son and brother of great kings, had put himself in the rank of his servants."¹

Thus they drifted down the stream as far as Brittany. The weather was perfect. The châteaux of the Loire defiled before the galiote. These people travelled as if they were poets.

As soon, however, as Richelieu permitted, Gaston rushed to Paris and again plunged into politics ; which meant to him only cowardice and betrayals, but which nevertheless fascinated him. This was his favourite vice which nothing would have induced him to correct, for politics gave him a round of new sensations. To hold the life of a friend in one's hand, knowing in advance that he will be delivered to the executioner, and at the same time bitterly to bewail his loss ; to realise also that the present grief will surely vanish and that one can joyously take another life in the hand,—such events evidently make days most interesting, when neither conscience nor heart are tender.

¹ Nicolas Goulas, *Mémoires*.

These excitements had filled the public career of Gaston, and when he found himself again in his château of Blois, almost twenty years after the radiant voyage down the Loire, for ever deprived, according to all probabilities, of the strong emotions whose savour Le Tellier had permitted him to taste for the last time in the interview at Limours, existence appeared to him intolerably pale and empty.

The good which he could do and actually was doing, did not interest him ; he bitterly regretted the evil no longer in his power.

No one, even amongst his enemies, has ever accused him of being wicked. Only physicians can analyse such morbid natures. Monsieur had commenced by struggling against ennui. He had collected a fine library and had attracted literary people to his court, in the hopes of refinding the taste for literature which had animated his youth. He recalled his collections of objects of art and curiosities, continued them and began new. Nothing, however, really interested him, except a botanical garden with which he occupied himself with pleasure.

Everything seemed infinitely puerile to a man who had contributed so long to the making of history ; it had become impossible for him to attach any importance to the little verses of his "beaux esprits," or to become impassioned over impaled birds or even an antique medal.

Wearied of war, he threw himself into devotion

The gazette of Loret made this fact part of the official news of France and kept the country informed of his progress in the path of piety. The first sign which he gave of his conversion was to correct himself of a fault which had formerly brought from Richelieu useless remonstrances. This Prince with so refined a taste, cursed and swore abominably. The habit had been caught by those near him ; we know that Mademoiselle herself used lively words in moments of irritation. In December, 1652, oaths and blasphemies were severely forbidden at the court of Blois, and Monsieur insisted upon obedience.

To-day, reports the gazette¹ :

Aucun de ceux qui sont à lui,
Quelque malheur qui lui survienne,
N'oserait jurer la mordienne.

One learns, afterwards, that these fine beginnings were not belied, and that Monsieur was now "less often at home than in the church." The Parisians and the Court of France had much difficulty in believing that repentance should have come to a spirit so free and so skeptical. His piety would have been entirely estimable "if his laziness had not in some portion aided his virtue." But however this may be, the devotion of Gaston was not the less sincere. He reformed his life, and succeeded in finding, at the foot of the altar, not perhaps contentment, but some patience and resignation.

¹ Gazette of August 22, 1654.

This did not come, however, for a long time ; the beginning of his definite exile was filled with miserable agitations and complaints without dignity. Madame rejoined him with their little flock of daughters.¹ This Princess did not add to the animation of the château. Entirely occupied with her own health, she lived shut up, without any other distraction than that of eating from morning till night, "in order to cure her melancholies," relates the Grande Mademoiselle, "but which really increases her ills." She gave no orders, only sent for her daughters ten minutes in the morning and evening, never spoke to them except to say "Hold yourselves erect, raise your head"; this was her sole instruction. She never saw them again during the day and never inquired what they were doing.

The governess in her turn neglected her pupils, who were abandoned to the care of inferiors. Their father found nothing to criticise in these educational methods ; Anne of Austria had not brought up her sons very differently. Besides, Monsieur was a submissive husband. He considered his wife's judgment good, and that she possessed much more intelligence than was indicated by her large, frightened eyes.

"This one," said Tallemant, "is a poor idiot, who nevertheless has intelligence." Mme. de Motteville judged her exactly the same. Madame was not loved because she was not amiable, but no one was astonished at her ascendancy over her husband.

¹ Four, but the last died at an early age.

Gaston's court, contrary to that of his daughter, was almost deserted. Disgrace for this couple had been the signal for general abandonment. During the first years, Gaston took the trouble to entertain his guests; he became again, for some hours, the incomparable talker, who knew a thousand beautiful tales and found charming methods of telling them.¹ Chapelle and Bachaumont were received at the château on their passage to Blois in 1656, and brought back the pleasantest remembrances of the dinners of the Duc d'Orléans.

La d'une obligeante manière,
D'un visage ouvert et riant,
Il nous fit bonne et grande chère,
Nous donnant a son ordinaire
Tout ce que Blois a de friand.

"The table arrangements were the neatest possible, not even a crumb of bread was allowed on the table. Well polished glasses of all sorts stood upon the buffet, and ice was abundant. The hall was prepared for the evening dance, all the beauties of the neighbouring cities invited, all the violins from the provinces collected."² After a short time, however, the effort of entertaining became a burden upon Monsieur. He cared for nothing but repose, and he would have passed the remainder of his days in sleeping with open eyes, if it had not been for his daughter of Saint-Fargeau, the terrible

¹ *Mémoires de Bussy-Rabutin.*

² *Voyage de Chapelle et de Bachaumont.*

Mademoiselle, from whom he had separated at Paris after a painful explanation, and who had never left him in peace since that time.

She had commenced by coming to seek him in spite of frequent commands, to which she paid not the least attention. The Grande Mademoiselle, openly allied to Condé, was a compromising guest for a Prince possessed at this epoch with the desire to retake his place near the throne. In vain she declared that she had recalled her troops from the army of the Prince, her father knew very well that she was mocking him, and received her coldly on the evening of her first arrival (December, 1652). "He came to meet me at the door of his room, and said, 'I do not dare to come out because I have a swollen cheek.'" A moment after Monsieur heard from afar a joyous voice; it was Mademoiselle relating the adventures during her flight to Saint-Fargeau. Monsieur could hold out no longer. He approached, made her recommence, and laughed with the others. The ice was broken. The fourth day, however, he said to Préfontaine, the man of confidence of Mademoiselle, while walking in the park of Chambord, "I love my daughter very much, but I have many obligations, and shall be easier if she stays here but little."

Mademoiselle departed the next day. The following month (January, 1653), Monsieur and Madame made a sojourn at Orléans. In spite of new orders, Mademoiselle came to pass a day with them. "I did not wait for escort," wrote she, "I

departed suddenly from Saint-Fargeau and went to Orléans."

This determination to impose herself upon people whom she saw with but little pleasure, is difficult to explain. Monsieur and Madame, who feared her, welcomed her, and her father said in bidding her farewell, "The affairs of your minority have never been settled. I wish to close this business. Give orders for this to your people."

Mademoiselle did not wait for a second request. "In consequence I wrote to Paris, then to Blois, a host of writings which were somewhat wearisome." Monsieur had his own projects. It was the single opportunity to extract a little money for the daughters by his second wife.

These young princesses had nothing to expect from their own mother, and very little from their father, whose pensions and appointments were destined to disappear with him. Madame was preoccupied with this situation.

For a long time [reports one of their intimates]¹ Madame has skilfully urged Monsieur to think of his affairs, and to put some solid property aside for her children, telling him that he possessed nothing in the world not reversible to the crown in case he had no male children, and that their daughters would be left to the mercy of the court and the ministers for their subsistence.

Until Gaston's disgrace, Madame had obtained nothing, and for cause. Her husband ruined himself at play; he had been seen to lose a half-million

¹ *Mémoires de Nicolas Goulas.*

francs to the famous Chevalier de Gramont. He reformed only at Blois, too late to begin to save ; his debts crushed him, and his pensions were paid most irregularly. The fortune of Mademoiselle presented itself as the sole means of floating the House of Orleans, and the accounts of her minority were the troubled waters in which it was proposed to fish. Monsieur did not suspect how much the exile and the influence of Préfontaine had changed his daughter.

The Préfontaine type has disappeared with the ancient régime. There is no place in our democratic society for these men at once servants and friends ; friends however who remained in the background. Persons of this kind were frequently met with in the great families of former times, and nothing appeared more natural than the dog-like devotion to their masters, always exacting and often ungrateful. The Grande Mademoiselle was not ungrateful but she was violent, and it was always upon the patient Préfontaine that she vented her anger. He was the counsellor, the factotum shrewd and firm, to whom all affairs came, the confidant who knew her most secret projects of marriage without ceasing to be the domestic of no account.

His mistress could do nothing without him, and she does not even tell us—she who loses herself in the smallest details when they concerned people of quality in her suite—at what date this precious man entered her service. She mentions him for the

first time in 1651, without saying who he is or where he comes from. From that date she never ceased to speak of him as long as the troubled times lasted, but left him in the shadow nevertheless in her *Mémoires*. When we have said that he was a gentleman, that there was no reason for his devotion to Mademoiselle but his own choice, we have told all we know about him. He had found the affairs of his mistress in a very bad condition, and so he warned her; Monsieur, her father, had been a negligent guardian and what is more an untrustworthy one. At first Mademoiselle would not listen to Préfontaine. It was at Paris in the midst of the fire of the Fronde, and she had other things to think of.

Préfontaine returned to the charge at Saint-Fargeau, where time abounded, and was better received. A new sentiment had awakened in Mademoiselle. She commenced to love money. She took interest in her affairs, and skilfully applied herself to economising with so much success that she would have soon risen to be a Countess Pimbesche.

Ideas of order and economy, rarely found with princesses of this epoch, occurred to her. "It is not sufficient," said she one day to Préfontaine, "to have an eye upon my legal affairs and the increase of my revenues; but it is also necessary to supervise the expenses of my house. I am convinced that I am robbed, and to prevent this, I wish to be accounted to as if I were a private person."

This was not beneath a great Princess. Examination proved that she *was* robbed by her people. After being assured of this, she took upon herself the duty of supervising all the accounts twice a week, "even to the smallest."

She knew the price of everything; "who could have predicted when I lived at Court, that I should ever know how much bricks, lime, plaster, carriages cost, what are the daily wages of the workmen, in fine all the details of a building, and that every Saturday I should myself settle the accounts: every one would have been skeptical." And still more the people at large; it was really almost incredible. She quickly perceived that Monsieur had not taken his duties as guardian very seriously. It was in his belief both the right and duty of the chief of the Orléans family to advance the general interests of the House, even at the expense of individual members. The daughter by the first marriage was enormously rich. What could be more just than to use her fortune for the common good? What more natural than to throw upon her the burden of debts contracted to add to the *éclat* of the family? or to give a little of her superfluity to her young sisters in view of their establishment?

Gaston sent to his daughter for signature an act conceived in this spirit, and received the clearest refusal. Very respectfully but with firmness Mademoiselle assured him that henceforth she intended to hold to her legal rights, which guaranteed the

integrity of her fortune. Monsieur threw himself into a great rage, but knew not what more to do. Politics gave him unexpected aid. A gentleman sent as courier by Condé into France had just been arrested. Among other letters was found one without address, but evidently destined for Mademoiselle and most compromising for her.

Mazarin charged the Archbishop of Embrun to take a copy of this to Gaston. The dispatch in which the prelate renders account of his mission has been preserved. Here is one of the significant passages :

BLOIS, March 31, 1653.

MONSEIGNEUR :

I arrived Sunday evening in this city where I was received most warmly by Monsieur. . . . Immediately upon arrival I had a conference of an hour with him alone in his cabinet. I pointed out to him through the letter addressed to Mademoiselle her relations to M. le Prince, the Spaniards, and M. de Lorraine, which were all visibly marked in the letter. He declared himself very ill satisfied with Mademoiselle, but that the Queen knew that they had never been eight hours at a time together : and that at this moment she was trying to cause trouble in demanding account of his care of her wealth when he was guardian, and that it was thus impossible to doubt his anger. I told him that I had orders to beseech his Royal Highness to make two observations upon the letter ; the first: that Mademoiselle as long as she enjoyed the free possession of her immense wealth could assist any party she pleased, and that the King in order to check this had resolved to place administrators or a commission over her property to preserve it for her own use, but without permitting its abuse. His Royal Highness should be left the choice of these commissioners.

The second remark was, that it was to be feared, according to

the news in the letter, that if M. le Prince advanced, Mademoiselle would join him, and that the King in this difficulty demanded counsel of him as the person most interested in the conduct of Mademoiselle. Gaston replied: that he had ordered his daughter to join him at Orléans, Tuesday of Holy Week; and he would bring her back to Blois, and keep her near him.

I have also, my Lord, talked over the same subjects with Madame as with Monsieur, knowing that she was very intelligent, and also that Monsieur deferred much to her opinions.

Mazarin took no action upon this communication of the Archbishop of Embrun.

It was sufficient to intimate to Monsieur that he was authorised not to worry himself about a rebel, and Gaston on his side asked nothing better.

Sure of being for the present under Court protection, he poured forth bitter words and threats against this disobedient and heartless daughter, who forgot her duty. Sometimes he wrote to her that "if she did not willingly give everything he demanded he would take possession of all the property and only give her what he pleased."

Sometimes he cast fire and flame between her and the public: "She does not love her sisters; says they are beggars; that after my death she will see them demand alms, without giving a penny. She wishes to see my children in the poorhouse," and other sentiments of the same kind, which were repeated at Saint-Fargeau.

Mademoiselle herself dreamed one day that Monsieur thought of enclosing her in a convent, "that this was the intention of the King," and that she must

prepare for his coming. At the same time she was warned from Paris that her father had promised the Court to arrest her as soon as she arrived at Blois. Things reached such a pass that Gaston could no longer hear the name of his daughter without flying into a passion.

The Princess had at first showed herself fearless. Knowing that the letter of Condé did not have any address, she denied that it was meant for her and took a high hand with her father; "I assert that they cannot take away my property unless I am proved either mad or criminal and I know very well that I am neither one nor the other."

Reflection, however, diminished her assurance. The idea of "being arrested" terrified her, and it was this fate, in the opinion of her ladies, which awaited her at Blois,—for which reason Monsieur, having previously forbidden her to come, now ordered her to meet him.

She wept torrents of tears; she was ill when she was obliged to obey and she confesses that on arriving at Blois she quite lost her head from terror. It was the story of the hare and the frogs. The projects of Gaston, whatever they may have been, vanished at sight of this agitated person and he had no other thought than of calming his daughter and avoiding scenes.

For this he exerted all his grace, which was much, and forced Mademoiselle, reassured and calmed, to acknowledge that her father could be "charming."

The days rolled by and the question of their differences was not touched upon. "I wanted one day to speak to him about my affairs and he fled and would pay no attention."

Mademoiselle felt the delights of a country covered with superb châteaux in which she was fêted, and amiable cities which fired cannon in her honour. She made excursions during a large part of the summer (1653) and finally separated from her father most amicably. Eight days after, the situation however was more sombre than before her departure for Blois. The demands of Monsieur had not diminished, his language became still more hard and menacing.

These differences lasted many years. Mademoiselle lets it be understood that it was a question of considerable sums. She relates sadly the progress of the ill-will of her father; how painful her sojourn at Blois had been, so that she wept from morning till night; how without the influence of Préfontaine she would have retired into a Carmelite convent; "not to be a religieuse, God having never given me that vocation, but to live away from the world for some years." The ennui of the cloister life would have been compensated by the thought that it was an economical one. "I should save much money," said she; and this thought consoled her. Once it was believed that an amicable solution was imminent. The father and daughter had submitted themselves to the arbitration of the maternal grandmother of Mademoiselle,

the old Mme. de Guise, who had made them promise in writing to sign "all that she wished without reading the stipulations."

The only result was a more definite embroilment. Mme. de Guise¹ "was devoted to her House,"² that ambitious and intriguing House of Lorraine into which she had married, and with which she was again connected through the second wife of Gaston, sister of the Duke Henri.³ When Mademoiselle, after "signing without reading," realised the force of the "transaction" into which she had been led by her grandmother, she declared that Mme. de Guise had despoiled her with shocking bad faith, in order that her half-sisters, the little Lorraines, should no longer be menaced with the "poor-house." The love of family had extinguished with Mme. de Guise, as with Monsieur, all considerations of justice and sense of duty towards her own granddaughter. All this happened at Orléans in the month of May, 1655. Mademoiselle, indignant, ran to her grandmother :

I told her that it was evident that she loved the House of Lorraine better than the House of Bourbon; that she was right in seeking to give money to my sisters, that they would have little from Madame, and this showed me, indeed, to be a lady of great wealth, enough to provide for others, and that

¹ Saint-Simon, *Écrits inédits*.

² Henriette-Catherine, Duchesse de Joyeuse, first married to Henri de Bourbon, Duc de Montpensier, by whom she had Marie de Bourbon, mother of Mademoiselle; married for the second time to Charles de Lorraine, Duc de Guise, by whom she had several children.

³ Henri de Lorraine reigned from 1608 to 1624.

the fortune of my family should be established upon what could be seized from me; but as I was so much above them that they could receive my benefactions, it would serve them better to depend upon my liberality rather than to attempt to swindle me; that this would be better before both God and man.

This scene lasted three hours. The same day Monsieur was warned that Mademoiselle refused to be "duped." He gave a precipitate order for departure, and declined to receive his daughter. In the disorder that ensued Madame almost went dinnerless and appeared much disconcerted.

The attendants intervened to save appearances at least, and a formal leave was taken, but this was all; the complete rupture was consummated. Upon the return to Saint-Fargeau, Mademoiselle at once learned that Monsieur had taken away her men of business, including the indispensable Préfontaine, and had left her without even a secretary. This gives a vision of the authority possessed by the chief of a family, and its limitations, with the princely houses of this epoch. We perceive how much better the fortune of Mademoiselle was defended against her father than her person and her independence. Monsieur did not dare to take away her money without a free and formal assent; he knew that if things were not done regularly "in a hundred years the heirs of Mademoiselle could torment the children of Monsieur." In revenge for this disability he tyrannised over her household. And here he was in his full right.

He could shut her up in a convent or in the Château of Amboise, as many counselled him to do, and this again would be within his legal powers. If he did nothing of the kind, it was only because, being nervous and impressionable, he dreaded feminine tears.

Mademoiselle realised that she was at his mercy ; it did not occur to her to contest the parental authority—outside of the question of money. She wept, “suffered much,” but she did not attempt to save Préfontaine.

The years which followed were sad ones for her. Until this time she had had but two days of grief a week, those upon which the courier arrived, on account of the business letters which must be read and answered. She confined herself to her study to conceal her red eyes, but her correspondence once sent off, “I only thought,” says she, “of amusing myself.”

Conditions changed when she was forced to understand that Monsieur, that father so contemptible, from whom she had suffered so much since her infancy, but so amiable that she admired and loved him notwithstanding, had no kind of affection for her. Very sensitive, in spite of her brusqueness, Mademoiselle experienced a profound grief at this reflection. Her temper gave way in a moment in which the young ladies of her suite, commencing to find the exile long, and to regret Paris, were ill-disposed to patience. There was coldness, frictions, and finally that domestic war, the account of

which fills a large space in the *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle.

Petty griefs, small intrigues, and much gossip rendered insupportable to one another persons condemned to daily intercourse. Affairs became so strained between some of the parties that communication was impossible, and this state of things lasted until the most discontented, Mmes. de Fiesque and de Frontenac, had formed the determination to return to Paris.

These quarrels had the effect of spoiling for Mademoiselle Saint-Fargeau, inclining her to submission to the Court; but mere mention is sufficient, and we shall not again refer to them.

Mademoiselle commenced to be convinced of the imprudence of being at odds with the Court and her father at the same time. Her obstinacy in sustaining Condé had ended by seriously vexing Mazarin. The nobility felt this attitude and showed less fondness for the Princess. In 1655 she approached to six leagues from Paris. She counted much upon visitors; very few appeared. "I was responsible for so many illnesses," says she wittily, "for all those who did not dare to confess that they feared to embroil themselves with the Court, feigned maladies or accidents in extraordinary numbers."

The third day she received an order to "return." This misadventure enlightened her; Mademoiselle admitted the necessity of making peace with royalty. Just at this period the Prince de Condé

grew less interesting to her, as his chances of becoming a widower diminished. Mme. la Princesse became gradually re-established in health, and each of her steps towards recovery made Mademoiselle a little less warm for M. le Prince. This latter perceived the change, and at once altered his tone. "There is no rupture," says the Duc d'Aumale, "but one can perceive the progress of the coolness and its accordance with *certain* news."

A letter from Condé, received after the journey to the environs of Paris, gave warning of the end of a friendship which on one side at least was entirely political.

BRUSSELS, March 6, 1655.

. . . As to this change which you declare to perceive in me, you do me much injustice and it seems to me that I have more right to reproach you than you me. Since your long silence the tone of your letters plainly indicates how different your present sentiments are from those of past times. This is not true of my own; they remain always the same and if you believe otherwise and if you lend faith to the rumours which my enemies start, it is my misfortune, not crime; for I protest there is nothing in them, that affairs are not in this state, and if they were I should never listen to a proposition without full consideration for your interests and satisfaction, also not without your consent and participation.

You will recognise the truth of this statement through my conduct and not one of my actions will ever give the lie to the words which I now give you, even if you should have forgotten all the fine sentiments you had when you came to see our army, which I can hardly consider possible for a generous person like you.

I knew that you came to Lésigny and that, the Court disap-

proving of this, you received orders to return, which fact gave me much displeasure.

Mademoiselle did not longer want a pretext for withdrawing her pin from the game. The embroilment with her father furnished it. She immediately prayed Condé to write to her no more. "It is necessary to hold back," said she to herself, "and if I am able without baseness to come into accord with the Cardinal Mazarin, I will do it in order to withdraw myself from the persecutions of his Royal Highness."

Some days later the Comte de Bethune transmitted to the Cardinal overtures of peace from the Grande Mademoiselle. The Cardinal desired pledges. She sent a recall for the companies from the Spanish army, upon which M. le Prince without warning "held the soldiers and put the officers in prison."

In vain the indignation of Mademoiselle. "It is seven or eight years," wrote Condé to one of the agents, "since I have really had the favour of Mademoiselle; I formerly possessed her good graces, but if she now wishes to withdraw them I must accept, without desperation."¹ Here is a man liberated rather than grieved.

Thus failed, one after the other, the menaces directed by the Fronde against royalty. The project of alliance between the two cadet branches of the House of Bourbon had been inspired in

¹ Letter of August 10, 1657, to the Comte d'Auteuil.

Mademoiselle by the desire to marry. Few of the ideas of all those which menaced the throne which had entered into the brain of the revolutionary leaders seemed so dangerous and caused so much care to Mazarin. We must recollect that he would have been ready, in order to appease the cadet branches, to marry the little Louis XIV. to his great cousin.

Reassured at length by the promises of Mademoiselle, who engaged herself to have nothing more to do with M. le Prince, Mazarin took the trouble to overcome his wrath and permitted her to expect the recompense for her submission.

In general, Mazarin had shown himself easy with the repentant Frondeurs. The Prince de Conti had been fêted at the Louvre in 1654. It is true that he accepted the hand of a niece of Mazarin in marriage, Anne Marie Martinozzi, on conditions which put him in bad odour with the public. "This marriage," wrote d'Ormesson,¹ "is one of the most signal marks of the inconsistency of human affairs and the fickleness of the French character to be seen in our times."

After Conti, another Prince, Monsieur, in person, entirely submerged as he was in laziness and devotions, exerted himself sufficiently to come to Court. The welcome involved conditions which contained nothing hard nor unusual for Gaston d'Orléans; it

¹ André d'Ormesson died in 1665, dean of the Council of State. Some fragments of his memoirs have been published by Chéruel, in the course of the Journal of his son, Olivier d'Ormesson.

cost him nothing but the abandonment of some last friends. In truth, he received but little in exchange. When he came to salute the King every one made him feel that he was already "in the ranks of the dead," according to the expression of Mme. de Motteville. The ill-humour caused by this impression quickly sent him back to Blois, which was precisely what was wished.

It was the men of business who profited above all by this reconciliation. They had greater freedom to harass Mademoiselle, and left her neither time nor repose. Their end was to make her execute the transaction signed at Orléans, but she held her own, without counsel or secretary. She only suffered from an enormous labour, of which her minority accounts were only a chapter, and not the most considerable. The administration of the immense domains had fallen entirely upon herself. It was now Mademoiselle who opened the mass of letters arriving from her registers, foresters, controllers, lawyers, farmers, and single subjects—in short, from all who in the principalities of Dombes or of Roche-sur-Yonne, in the duchies of Montpensier or of Catellerault, had an account to settle with her, an order to demand of her, or a claim to submit.

It was Mademoiselle herself who replied; she who followed the numerous lawsuits necessitated by the paternal management; she who terminated the great affair of Champigny, of which the echo was wide-spread on account of the rank of the

parties and of the remembrances awakened by the pleaders.

Champigny was a productive territory situated in Touraine, and an inheritance of Mademoiselle. Richelieu had despoiled her of it when she was only a child, through a forced exchange for the Château of Bois-le-Vicomte, in the environs of Meaux.

Become mistress of her own fortune, Mademoiselle summoned the heirs of the Cardinal to give restitution, and had just gained her suit when Monsieur took away Préfontaine. The decree returning Champigny to her allowed her also damages, the amount to be decided by experts, for buildings destroyed and woods spoiled. Mademoiselle estimated that these damages might reach a large sum ; she knew that with her father at Blois the rumour ran that she had been placed in cruel embarrassments and that it would be repeated to all comers that she had obtained almost nothing from this source. This report excited her to action. The moment arrived ; Mademoiselle went to Champigny, and remained there during several weeks, spending entire days upon the heels of eighteen experts, procurers, lawyers, gentlemen, masons, carpenters, wood merchants, collected together to value the damages. She had long explanations with that "good soul Madelaine," counsellor of the Parliament, and charged with directing the investigation, who was confounded at the knowledge of the Princess. He said to her : "You know our

business better than we ourselves, and you talk of affairs like a lawyer." Operations finished, Mademoiselle had the pleasure of writing to Blois that this doubtful affair from which she was supposed to receive only "50,000 francs, really amounted to 550,000." She came out less generously from her litigation with her father. Mazarin rendered Mademoiselle the bad service of having her suit introduced by the King's counsellor. A decree confirmed the decision of Mme. de Guise, and there was nothing to do but to obey. Mademoiselle signed, "furiously" weeping, the act which despoiled her, and submitted with despair to the departure for Blois.

She was going to visit her father, after having the thought flash through her mind that he could order her assassination. It is said there had been some question of this at Blois. "Immersed in melancholy reveries, I dreamed that his Royal Highness was a son of the Médicis, and I even reflected that the poison of the Médicis must have already entered my veins and caused such thoughts."

Her father, on the other hand, was going to overwhelm her with tenderness after having permitted it to be said without protest that Mademoiselle was preparing a trap, with the purpose of poisoning one of his gentlemen.

Considering the times and the family, this was a situation only a little "strained"; but Mademoiselle was so little a "Médicis" that she made her journey a prey to a poignant grief, which was plainly

to be read upon her countenance by the attendants at her arrival at Blois.

“Upon my arrival I felt a sudden chill. I went directly to the chamber of Monsieur; he saluted me and told me he was glad to see me. I replied that I was delighted to have this honour. He was much embarrassed.” Neither the one nor the other knew what more to say. Mademoiselle silently forced back her tears. Monsieur, to give himself composure, caressed the greyhounds of his daughter, La Reine and Madame Souris. Finally he said: “Let us go to seek Madame.”

“She received me very civilly and made many friendly remarks. As soon as I was in my own chamber, Monsieur came to see me and talked as if nothing disagreeable had passed between us.” A single quarter of an hour had sufficed to bring back to him his freedom of spirit, and he made an effort to regain the affections of his daughter.

She had never known him to continue to be severe; Monsieur counted upon this fact. He was attentive, flattered her weaknesses great and small, amused her with projects of marriage, and treated her greyhounds as personages of importance; he could be seen at midnight in the lower court in the midst of the dunghill, inquiring about Madame Souris, who had met with an accident. He did still better; he wrote to Mazarin asking for an accommodation with Mademoiselle.

After the rupture with Condé, it was evident from signs not to be mistaken that the hour was

approaching in which the all-powerful minister would pardon the heroine of Orléans and of Porte Saint-Antoine. In the month of July, 1656, Mademoiselle went to the baths of Forges, in Normandy. She had passed in sight of Paris; had sojourned in the suburbs without anxiety, and her name this time had not made "every one ill."

Visitors had flocked. Mademoiselle had entertained at dinner all the princesses and duchesses then in Paris; and she drew the conclusion, knowing the Court and the courtiers, that her exile was nearing an end. "In truth," says she, "I do not feel as much joy at the thought as I should have believed. When one reaches the end of a misery like mine, its remembrance lasts so long and the grief forms such a barrier against joy that it is long before the wall is sufficiently melted to permit happiness to be again enjoyed."

Nevertheless the news of the letter from her father to Mazarin put her in a great agitation. The Court of France was then in the east of France where Turenne made his annual campaign against M. le Prince and the Spaniards. Mademoiselle resolved to approach in order to sooner receive the response of the Cardinal.

She quitted Blois as she had arrived there, a stranger. One single thing could have touched her: the recall of Préfontaine and of her other servants struck down for having been faithful. This Monsieur had absolutely refused; his exaggerated politeness and his grimaces of tenderness had only

the result of alienating his daughter. She felt that he detested her and she no longer loved him.

Upon the route to Paris she doubled the length between her stopping-places. Impatience gained as she neared the end and the "barrier of grief" permitted itself gradually to be penetrated by joy.

She again saw, in passing, Étampes¹ and its ruins, which already dated back five years and were found untouched by La Fontaine in 1663. So long and difficult in certain regions was the uplifting of France, after the wars of the Fronde, never taken very seriously by historians, doubtless because too many women were concerned in them.

"We looked with pity at the environs of Étampes," wrote La Fontaine.² "Imagine rows of houses without roofs, without windows, pierced on all sides; nothing could be more desolate and hideous." He talked of it during an entire evening, not having the soul of a heroine of the Fronde, but Mademoiselle had traversed with indifference these same ruins in which the grass flourished in default of inhabitants to wear it away. No remorse, no regret, however light, for her share in the responsibility for the ruin of this innocent people, had touched her mind, and yet she was considered to possess a tender heart.

She learned at Saint-Cloud that she had been in-

¹ Turenne had conquered the troops of the Prince at Étampes (May, 1652), upon the occasion of a review in honour of Mademoiselle and of the disorder which resulted. See *The Youth of La Grande Mademoiselle*. Some weeks later, he besieged the town.

² Letter to his wife, August 3, 1663.



JEAN DE LA FONTAINE

From an engraving by Grevedon



vited to rejoin the Court at Sedan. Mademoiselle took a route through Reims. She thus traversed Champagne, which had been a battle-field during the more than twenty years of the wars with Spain¹; and which appeared the picture of desolation. The country was depopulated, numbers of villages burned, and the cities ruined by pillage and forced contributions of war.

More curious in regard to things which interest *la canaille*, Mademoiselle might have heard from the mouths of the survivors that of all the enemies who had trampled upon and oppressed this unfortunate people, the most cruel and barbarous had been her ally, the Prince de Condé, with whom were always found her own companies. She would not the less have written in her *Mémoires*, entirely unconsciously, apropos of her trouble in obtaining pardon from the Court: "I had really no difference with the Court, and I was criminal only because I was the daughter of his Royal Highness."

We have hardly the right to reproach her with this monstrous phrase. To betray one's country was a thing of too frequent occurrence to cause much embarrassment. The only men of this epoch who reached the point of considering the common people² and attaching the least importance to their sufferings were revolutionary spirits or disciples of St. Vincent de Paul.

Mademoiselle had no leaning towards extremes.

¹ Richelieu had declared war with Spain March 26, 1635.

² The phrase is by Bussy-Rabutin.

Neither her birth nor the slightly superficial cast of her mind fostered free opinions. During her journey in Champagne, she was delighted to hear again the clink of arms and the sound of trumpets. Mazarin had sent a large escort. The skirmishers of the enemy swept the country even to the environs of Reims. A number of the people of the Court, seizing the occasion, joined themselves to her, in order to profit by her gens d'armes and light riders.

Colbert also placed himself under her protection with chariots loaded with money which he was taking to Sedan, and this important convoy was surrounded by the same "military pomp, as if it had guarded the person of the King."

The great precautions were, perhaps, on account of the chariots of money; the honours, however, were for Mademoiselle, and they much flattered her vanity. The commandant of the escort demanded the order from her. When she appeared the troops gave the military salute. A regiment which she met on her route solicited the honour of being presented to her. She examined it closely, as a war-like Princess who understood military affairs, and of whom the grand Condé had said one day, apropos of a movement of troops, that "Gustavus Adolphus could not have done better." A certain halt upon the grass in a meadow through which flowed a stream left an indelible impression. Mademoiselle offered dinner this day to all the escort and almost all the convoy. The

sight of the meadow crowded with uniformed men and horses recalled to her the campaigns of her fine heroic times. "The trumpets sounded during dinner; this gave completely the air of a true army march." She arrived at Sedan intoxicated by the military spectacle of her route, and her entry showed this. Considering her late exile the lack of modesty might well be criticised. The Queen, Anne of Austria, driving for pleasure in the environs of Sedan, saw a chariot appear with horses at full gallop surrounded by a mass of cavalry: "I arrived in this field at full speed with gens d'armes and light riders, their trumpets sounding in a manner sufficiently triumphant."

The entire Court of France recognised the Grande Mademoiselle before actually seeing her. Exile had not changed her, and this entrance truly indicated her weaknesses.

CHAPTER II

The Education of Louis XIV.—Manners—Poverty—Charity—Vincent de Paul, a Secret Society—Marriage of Louis XIV.—His Arrival at Power, on the Death of Mazarin—He Re-educates himself.

THE remembrance of the Fronde was destined to remain a heavy weight during the remainder of the reign of Louis XIV. Its shadow dominated for more than half a century interior politics and decided the fate, good and bad, of the great families.

The word "Liberty" had become synonymous with "Licence, Confusion, Disorder,"¹ and the ancient Frondeurs passed the remainder of their lives in disgrace, or at least in disfavour. The Grande Mademoiselle was never pardoned, although she did not wish to avow this, even to herself. She might have realised the fact at once upon her return to Court, if she had not decided to believe the contrary. Warnings were not wanting. The first was her encounter with the Queen Mother in the field of Sedan.

When Anne of Austria saw arrive to sound of trumpets, with manner at ease and triumphant, this insolent Princess who had drawn her cannon upon the King, hardly embracing her niece, the Queen

¹ See the *Mémoires de Louis XIV.*, edited by Charles Dreyss. The *Mémoires* of Louis XIV. were not written by himself. He dictated them to his secretaries afterward adding notes in his own handwriting and correcting the proofs. See the *Introduction* by M. Dreyss.

Mother burst into reproaches, and declared that after the battle of Saint-Antoine, "if she had held her, she would have strangled her."¹ Mademoiselle wept; the Court looked on. "I have forgotten everything," said the Queen at length, and her niece was eager to believe her. The meeting with the King was still more significant. He arrived on horseback, soaked and muddy, from the city of Montmédy, taken that same day from the Spaniards (August 7, 1657).

His mother said to him, "Behold a young lady, whom I present to you and who is very sorry to have been so naughty; she will be 'very good' in future." The young King only laughed and replied by talking of the siege of Montmédy.

Mademoiselle nevertheless departed from Sedan filled with joyous thoughts. She imagined reading in all eyes the news of marriage with the brother of the King, the little Monsieur. He was seventeen, she thirty, with hair already partially white.

Some months ensued, passed in a half retreat, and the Grande Mademoiselle remained with the Court during the years of transition in which the personal government of Louis XIV. was maturing. A new régime was being born and a new world with it.

One could gradually see this new formation relegating to the shadow of the past the old spirit of independence, and stifling the confused aspirations of the country towards any legal liberties.

¹ *Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier. Mémoires de Montglat.*

Mazarin incarnated this great political movement. On the eve of disappearance, this unpopular minister had become all France.

He was master ; no one thought any longer of resisting him ; but he was always detested, never admired. France having at this date neither journals nor parliamentary debates, the foreign policy of Mazarin, which in our eyes did him so much honour, remained very little known even at Paris. This explains why his glory has been in large part posthumous. It has increased in measure as it has been possible to judge of his entire policy, from documents contained in our national archives or in those of other countries. His correspondence displays so fine a diplomatic genius, that the historians have turned aside from the evil side of the man, his littlenesses, in order to give full weight to his services as minister. Precisely a contrary course had been taken in the seventeenth century. Little besides the Cardinal's defects, open to all eyes, were realised. Bad fortune had redoubled his rapacity. Mazarin had guarded in his heart the experience of poverty at the time in which he was expelled from the kingdom. He had sworn to himself that he would not again be taken without "ammunition." He had worked industriously since his return in putting aside millions in safe keeping. Everything aided him in raising this kind of war treasure. He sold high functions of State, and also those belonging to low degree, even to that of laundress to the Queen. He shared the benefits

with the corsairs to whom he gave letters of marque. He undertook contracts for public service, pocketed the money, left our ambassadors without salaries, our vessels and fortifications without means of subsistence. The army was crying with hunger and thirst as soon as he made himself its sutler and its commissariat. He furnished bread of diminished purity and even found means, said the courtiers, to make the soldiers, so rarely paid themselves, pay for the water they drank. Turenne once broke up his plate to distribute the pieces to his troops, who were perishing from want.

Comical scenes mingled with these tragic ones. Bussy-Rabutin, who served in the army of Turenne, had been fortunate at play. The Cardinal had learned of this, and ordered it to be represented to Bussy that his pay which had been pledged in the game would be guarded by the Cardinal as his portion of the gain. He had extended his traffic into the royal palace. It was he who furnished furniture and utensils, He undertook to provide the Court mourning, and costumes for the fêtes: when the King danced a ballet, his first minister gained by the decorations and accessories. The housekeeping accounts passed through his hands. During the campaign of 1658, he suppressed the King's cook, in order to appropriate to himself what the table would have cost. Louis XIV. was forced to invite himself to dine with this one and that one. Mazarin touched even his pocket money and the young King permitted it

with a patience which was a constant source of astonishment to the courtiers. His mother was neither better treated nor less submissive.

The Cardinal was as jealous of his authority as of his money. The King had no voice in his council; when he accorded a pardon, however trivial, his first minister revoked it, "scolding him like a schoolboy."¹

It was said of the Queen Mother that her influence was only worth a hundred crowns, and she agreed. Still more, she was scolded from morning till night. Age had rendered Mazarin insupportable. He had no delicacy with the King, still less with the King's mother: the courtiers shrugged their shoulders in hearing him speak to Anne of Austria "as to a chambermaid"²

The Queen was not insensible to this rudeness. She confessed to the faithful Motteville "that the Cardinal had become so bad tempered and so avaricious that she did not know how in the future it was going to be possible to live with him." But it did not seem to occur to her that it might be possible to live without the Cardinal. Can it be believed that Anne of Austria and Mazarin were married, as La Palatine,³ mother of the Regent, asserted? As they gradually grew old, one is tempted to believe it, so strongly the spectacle offered by these illustrious persons, he so disagreeable, she so

¹ Montglat.

² *Id.*

³ Letters of January 3, 1717, of September 27, 1718, and of July, 1722. Madame adds in this last: "Now, all the circumstances are known."

PRIÈRE DU ROY.

Jesus-Christ Roy du Ciel et de la Terre, ie vous adore et reconnois pour le Roy des Roys. C'est de vostre Majesté Diuine que ie tiens ma Couronne : mon Dieu ie vous l'offre, pour la Gloire de la très Sainte Trinité, et pour l'honneur de la Reine des Agnes la Sacrée Vierge Marie que iay choisy pour ma Protectrice, et des Estats que vous m'auiez donné; Seigneur baillez moy vostre crainte et une si grande Sagesse et humilité, que ie puisse deuenir un homme selon vostre cœur; en sorte que ie merite efficacement le tiltre aimable de Louis Dieu donné le Pacifique pour maintenir vostre Peuple en Paix, afin qu'il vous serve avec tranquillité, et l'acomplissement de toutes les Vertus.

VŒU ET PRIÈRE DES PEUPLES POUR LE ROY.

Adorable Redempteur Jesus-Christ, qui estes le distributeur des Couronnes, receuez la pieté du Roy tres-Crestien, et exaucez ses Prieres respectueuses faites par l'entremise de vostre Sainte Mere Vierge, que linfluence des Graces du St. Esprit luy soit donnée, afin croissant en aage, it croisse aussi en telle Sagesse, qu'il puisse maintenir voster peuple in Paix, pour mieux observer vos saints cammandemens.

(Translation of the above.)

PRAYER OF THE KING.

Jesus Christ, King of the Heavens and the Earth, I adore Thee and recognize Thee for the King of Kings, the divine majesty from whom I receive my crown, which I offer to Thee for the Glory of the Most Holy Trinity, and for the honor of the Queen of Angels, the blessed Virgin Mary, whom I have chosen as my Protector, and also of the States which Thou hast given me. Lord grant me due reverence and that I may possess so much wisdom and humility that I may become a man after Thine own heart, so that I may truly merit the title of the Beloved Louis, the God-given and peaceful, and be able to maintain Thy people in peace that they may live in tranquillity and virtuously serve Thee.

VOW AND PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE.

Adorable Redeemer Jesus Christ; who art the giver of crowns; regard the piety of the most Christian King and listen to his prayers for the intervention of the most blessed Mother Virgin; and grant that the influence of the Holy Spirit may so be poured out upon him that as he increases in years he may also grow in wisdom; and that he may keep Thy people in peace that they may better be able to preserve Thy commands.



LOUIS XIV. AS A BOY, DEDICATING HIS CROWN

After the painting by Greg Huret

submissive, gives the impression of two destinies "united together," according to the expression of the Cardinal himself,¹ "by bonds which could not be broken." The question to be solved is, could Mazarin marry? According to tradition he was not a priest. According to the Euridite that point is open to discussion.² Until this matter is fixed, the marriage of Anne of Austria with her minister will remain among historical enigmas, for everything said will be words in the air.

The patience of Louis XIV. can only be explained by his entire bringing up and by the state of mind which had been its fruit.

Louis's cradle had been surrounded by a crowd of servitors charged to watch over his least movement. His mother adored him and, for a queen, occupied herself much with him. Nevertheless, there could hardly a child be found throughout the entire kingdom so badly cared for as the son of the King.

Louis XIV. had never forgotten this neglect and spoke of it all his life with bitterness.

"The King always surprises me," relates Mme. de Maintenon at Saint Cyr, "when he speaks to me of his education. His governesses gossiped the

¹ Letter to the Queen, Anne of Austria, October 27, 1651.

² March 23, 1865, Père Theiner, Guardian of the Secret Archives of the Vatican, replied to some one who had pressed the question: "Our acts of December 16, 1641, in which Jules Mazarin was created Cardinal, do not say whether or not he was a priest. How could he then have been admitted to the order of Cardinal-priest? No doubt he was a priest." The letter of Père Theiner has been published by M. Jules Loiseleur in his *Problèmes historiques*.

entire day, and left him in the hands of their maids without paying any attention to the young Prince." The maids abandoned him to his own devices and he was once found in the basin of the fountain in the Palais Royal. One of his greatest pleasures was to prowling in the kitchens with his brother, the little Monsieur. "He ate everything he could lay his hands on without paying attention to its healthfulness. If they were frying an omelette, he would break off a piece, which he and Monsieur devoured in some corner."¹ One day when the two little Princes thus put their fingers into the prepared dishes, the cooks impatiently drove them away with blows from dishcloths. He played with any one. "His most frequent companion," again relates Mme. de Maintenon, "was the daughter of the Queen's own maid." When he was withdrawn from such surroundings, to be led to his mother, or to figure in some ceremony, he appeared a bashful boy who looked at people with embarrassment without knowing what to say, and who cruelly suffered from this shyness.

One day after they had given him a lesson, his timidity prevented him from remembering the right words and he burst into tears with rage and anger. The King of France to make a fool of himself!

At five and a half years, they gave him a tutor and many masters,² but he learned nothing. Maz-

¹ *Letters of Madame de Maintenon* edited by Geoffroy.

² For further details see the excellent volume of M. Lacour-Gayet, *L'éducation politique de Louis XIV.*

arin for reasons known to himself would not force him to work ; and circumstances favoured the views of the first minister. The Fronde came, and rendered any study impossible on account of the complete upsetting of the daily life of the Court of France, which was only encamped when it was not actually on the move. Louis XIV. was fourteen at the date of the reinstallation of the Court at the Louvre and there was no question of making him recover the lost time ; he thenceforth passed his days in hunting, in studying steps for the ballet, and in amusing himself with the nieces of the Cardinal. The political world believed that it divined the reason for this limited education and severely expressed its opinion about it. "The King," wrote the Ambassador from Venice,¹ "applies himself the entire day to learning the ballet. . . . Games, dances, and comedies are the only subjects of conversation with the King, the intention being to turn him aside from affairs more solid and important." The Ambassador returns to the same subject upon the occasion of an Italian opera,² in which the King exhibited himself as Apollo surrounded by beautiful persons representing the nine muses:

Certain people blame this affair, but these do not understand the politics of the Cardinal, who keeps the King expressly occupied with pastimes, in order to turn his attention

¹ December 24th, *Relations des ambassadeurs vénitiens*.

² The letter is dated April 21, 1654. Louis XIV. was then fifteen and a half years of age.

from solid and important pursuits, and whilst the King is concerned in rolling machines of wood upon the stage, the Cardinal moves and rolls at his good pleasure, upon the theatre of France, all the machines of state.

Some few observers, of whom Mazarin himself was one, divined that this youth, with his air of being absorbed in tomfooleries, secretly reflected upon his profession of King, and upon the means of rendering himself capable of sustaining it. Nature had endowed him with the instinct of command, joined to a very lively sentiment of the duties of his rank. Louis says in his *Mémoires*, "even from infancy the names alone of the kings *fainéants* and mayors of the palace gave me pain if pronounced in my presence."¹

His preceptor, the Abbé of Pérefixe, had encouraged this sentiment, at the same time, however, permitting his pupil, by a contradiction for which perhaps he was not responsible, to take the road which leads in the direction of idleness, and thus making it possible for Louis to become a true King *fainéant* himself.

Pérefixe had written for the young King a history of King Henry the Great in which one reads

that royalty is not the trade of a do-nothing, that it consists almost entirely of action, that a King should make a pleasure of his duty, that his enjoyment should be in reigning and he only should know how to reign, that is, he should himself hold the helm of the state. His glory is interested in this.

¹ Mme. de Motteville had heard him express the same idea. Cf. his *Mémoires*, v., 101, ed. Petitot.

In truth, who does not know that there can be no honour in bearing a title whose functions one does not fulfil—

a doctrine which would suppress the first ministers and by which Louis XIV. profited later.

Chance came to the aid of the preceptor. On June 19, 1651, the ancient governess of the King, Mme. de Lansac, disturbed him in the midst of a lesson, in order to make a gift of "three letters written by Catherine de Médicis to Henry III.,¹ her son, for his edification." Pérefixe took the letters and read them aloud, the King listening "with much attention." One of them was almost a memorial.² In it, Catherine gave to her son the same precept as Pérefixe to his pupil: "a king must reign," that is to say, carry out the functions belonging to his title. In order to "reign," one must begin to work at once upon awakening, read all the dispatches and afterwards the replies, speak personally to the agents, receive every morning accounts of receipts and expenditures ; pursue this course from morning till night, and every day of one's life. It was the programme for a slave to power. Louis XIV. made it his own, in the bottom of his soul ; he was not yet thirteen.

Such beautiful resolutions however, were destined to remain dead so long as Mazarin lived. They could only be executed to the detriment of his

¹ *Les fragments des mémoires inédits* by Dubois, valet of Louis XIV., published by Léon Aubineau in the *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, and in his *Notices littéraires* upon the 17th century.

² Cf. Lacour-Gayet, p. 203.

authority, and the idea of entering into a struggle with the Cardinal was repugnant to the young King, partially on account of old affection, partially on account of timidity and the habit of obedience.

The mind of Louis XIV. had however been awakened and the fruits of this awakening were later visible, but for a time he was content to find good excuses for leaving affairs alone. He explains in his *Mémoires* that he was arrested by political reasons ; as he had too much experience also (however strange this word may appear when applied to a child so foolishly brought up) not to realise the danger of a revolution in the royal palace in the present condition of France after the devastations of the civil wars.

In default of the science which one draws from books, Louis XIV. had received lessons in realities from the Fronde : The riots and barricades, the vehement discourse of the Parliament to his mother, the humiliating flights with the Court, the periods of poverty in which his servants had no dinner and he himself slept with his sheets full of holes, and wore clothes too short, the battles in which his subjects fired upon him, the treasons of his relations and of his nobility and their shameful bargains ; nothing of all this had been lost upon the young King.

With a surface order re-established, he perceived how troubled the situation remained at bottom, how precarious, and he judged it prudent to defer what he both "wished" and "feared," says very

clearly his *Mémoires*. He queries if this were an error :

It is necessary [says he] to represent to one's self the state of affairs: Agitations throughout the entire kingdom were at their height; a foreign war continued in which a thousand advantages had been lost to France owing to these domestic troubles; a Prince of my own blood and a very great name at the head of my enemies; many cabals in the state; the Parliaments still in possession of usurped authority; in my own Court very little of either fidelity or interest, and above all my subjects, apparently the most submissive, were as great a care and as much to be suspected as those most openly rebellious.

Was this the moment in which to expose the country to new shocks ?

Louis XIV. had remained convinced¹ to the contrary, avowing, however, that he had much to criticise in the fashions of Mazarin,

a minister [pursued he] re-established in spite of so many factions, very able, very adroit, who loved me and whom I loved, and who had rendered me great services, but whose thoughts and manners were naturally very different from mine, and whom I could not always contradict nor discredit without anew exciting, by that image, however erroneous, of disgrace, the same tempests which had been so difficult to calm.

The King had also to take into consideration his own extreme youth, and his ignorance of affairs. He relates in regard to this point his ardent desire for glory, his fear of beginning ill, "for one can never retrieve one's self"; his attention to the

¹ M. Dreyss dates the writing of this portion of the *Mémoires* about 1670.

course of events "in secret and without a confidant"; his joy when he discovered that people both able and consummate shared his fashion of thinking.

Considering everything, had there ever been a being urged forward and retarded so equally, in his design to take upon himself "the guidance of the state"?

This curious page has no other defect than that of having been dictated by a man matured, in whose thoughts things have taken a clearness not existing in the mind of the youth, and who believes himself to recollect "determinations" when there existed in reality only "desires."

Louis XIV. would be unpardonable if full credit were given to his *Mémoires*. Why, if he saw so clearly, did he grumble at any kind of work? When Louis was sixteen, Mazarin had arranged with him some days in which he might be present at a council. The King was bored and retired to talk of the next ballet and to play the guitar with his intimates. Mazarin was obliged to scold him to force him to return and remain at the council.

With a capacity for trifling, he cared for nothing serious, and there was much laziness contained in his resolution to leave all to his minister. The Court had formed its own opinion: it considered the young King incapable of application. It was also said that he lacked intelligence, and in this belief there was no error. Louis himself alluded to this and said with simplicity, "I am very stupid."

The libertine youth who surrounded him, and whom his solemn air restrained, did not conceal the fact that they found him a great bore, as probably did also Madame de Maintenon a half-century later. The Guiche and the Vardes believed him doomed to insignificance and did not trouble themselves much about him. The city was less convinced that he was a cipher, perhaps because otherwise it could not so easily have taken his part. Paris was commencing to fear those princes with whom, for one reason or another, first ministers were necessary, and the Parisian bourgeoisie was on the watch for some proof of intelligence in the young monarch. "It is said that the mind of the King is awakening," wrote Guy Patin in 1654; "God be thanked!"

This first light not having an apparent development, Paris, whilst waiting for something better, admired the looks of the sovereign. "I have to-day seen the King on his way to the chase," again wrote Guy Patin four years later. "A fine Prince, strong and healthy; he is tall and graceful; it is a pity that he does not better understand his duties."¹ His serious air was also lauded, his dislike to debauchery in any form, and the modesty which made him bravely reply before the entire Court, to a question about a new play: "I never judge a subject about which I know nothing."²

This was not the response of a fool.

¹ Letters of June 9, 1654, and April 9, 1658.

² *Sagraisiana*. Louis XIV. was seventeen when he made this remark.

In fine, as he was very cold, very capable of dissimulation, as he spoke little, through calculation as much as through instinct, and generally confined his conversation to trifles, this youth upon whom all France had its eyes fixed remained an unknown quantity to his subjects.

In September, 1657, two strangers crossing the Pont Neuf found themselves in the midst of a pressure of people. The crowd precipitated itself with cries of joy towards a carriage whose livery had been recognised.

It was the Grande Mademoiselle returning from exile, and coming to take possession of the palace of the Luxembourg, in which her father permitted her to lodge, feeling certain that he himself should never return to it. The two strangers noted in their *Journal de Voyage*¹ that the Parisians bore a "particular affection" for this Princess, because she had behaved like a "true amazon" during the civil war.

The Court had resigned itself to the inevitable. Mademoiselle had remained popular in Paris, and her exploits during the Fronde and her fine bearing at the head of her regiment were remembered with enthusiasm. She only passed through the city at this time, having affairs to regulate in the Provinces. Upon her definite return on December 31st, the Court and the city crowded to see her. The Luxembourg overflowed during several days, after which, when society had convinced itself that Mademoiselle had no longer a face "fresh as a

¹ *Journal de voyage de deux jeunes Hollandais à Paris* (1656-1658).



LOUIS XIV. AS A YOUNG MAN

From a chalk drawing in the British Museum Print Room

fully blown rose,"¹ its curiosity was satisfied and it occupied itself with something else.

Mademoiselle herself had much to do. The idea of marrying the little Monsieur had not left her mind since the meeting at Sedan. She was assured that the Prince was dying of desire for her, and Mademoiselle naïvely responded that she very well perceived this. "This does not displease me," adds she; "a young Prince, handsome, well-made, brother of the King, appears a good match."

In expectation of the betrothal, she stopped her pursuits of the happy interval at Saint-Fargeau in which she had loved intellectual pleasures, in order to make herself the comrade of a child only absorbed in pastimes belonging to his age, and passed the winter in dancing, in masquerading, in rushing through the promenades and the booths of the fair of Saint-Germain.²

The public remarked that the little Monsieur appeared "not very gay" with his tall cousin, and troubled himself but little to entertain her,³ and that he would have preferred other companions better suited to his seventeen years.

Mademoiselle did not perceive this. Philip, Duke of Anjou, had a face of insipid beauty posed upon a little round body. He did not lack *esprit*, had not an evil disposition, and would have made an

¹ *Mémoires de Mme. de Motteville.*

² The fair of Saint-Germain was held between Saint-Sulpice and Saint-Germain-des-Prés, from February 3d to the evening before Palm Sunday. The Court and the populace elbowed each other there.

³ *Journal de deux jeunes Hollandais.*

amiable prince if reasons of state had not tended to reduce him to the condition of a marionette.

His mother and Mazarin had brought him up as a girl, for fear of his later troubling his elder brother, and this education had only too well succeeded. By means of sending him to play with the future Abbé de Choisy, who put on a robe and patches to receive him; by means of having him dressed and barbered by the Queen's maids of honour and putting him in petticoats and occupying him with dolls, he had been made an ambiguous being, a species of defective girl having only the weaknesses of his own sex. Monsieur had a new coat every day and it worried him to spot it, and to be seen with his hair undressed or in profile when he believed himself handsomer in full face. Paris possessed no greater gossip; he babbled, he meddled, he embroiled people by repeating everything, and this amused him.

Mademoiselle considered it her duty to "preach" to him of "noble deeds," but she wasted her time. He was laziness and weakness itself. The two cousins were ill-adapted to each other in every way.

When they entered a salon together, Monsieur short and full, attired in the costume of a hunter, his garments sewed from head to foot with precious stones, Mademoiselle a little masculine of figure and manner and negligent in her dress, they were a singular couple. Those who did not know them opened their eyes wide, and they were often seen together in the winter at least, for the society was

at this date most mixed, even in the most élite circles.

From Epiphany to Ash-Wednesday, the Parisians had no greater pleasure than to promenade masked at night, and to enter without invitation into any house where an entertainment was taking place. Louis XIV. gladly joined in these gaieties. Upon one evening of Mardi-Gras, when he was thus running the streets with Mademoiselle, they met Monsieur dressed as a girl with blond hair.¹ Keepers of inns sent their guests to profit by this chance of free entry. A young Dutchman related that he went the same night "with those of his inn" to five great balls, the first at the house of Mme. de Villeroy, the last with the Duchess of Valentinois, and that he had seen at each place more than two hundred masks.²

The crowd would not permit that entrance should be refused on any pretext.

The same Dutchman reports with a note of bitterness that on another evening it had been impossible to penetrate into the house of the Maréchal de l'Hôpital, because the King being there, measures had been taken to avoid too great a crowd. Custom obliged every one to submit to receiving society, choice or not. At a grand fête given by the Duc de Lesdiguières, which in the bottom of his heart he was offering to Mme. de Sévigné, "The King had hardly departed when the crowd

¹ *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle.

² *Journal de deux jeunes Hollandais*.

commenced to scuffle and to pillage every thing, until, as it was stated, it became necessary to replace the candles of the chandeliers four or five times and this single article cost M. de Lesdiguières more than a hundred pistoles."¹

Such domestic manners had the encouragement of the King, who also left his doors open upon the evenings on which he danced a ballet. He did better still. He went officially to sup "with the Sieur de la Bazinière," ancient lackey become financier and millionaire, and having the bearing, the manners, and the ribbon cascades of the Marquis de Mascarille. He desired that Mademoiselle should invite to the Luxembourg, Mme. de l'Hôpital, ancient laundress married twice for her beautiful eyes; the first time by a *partisan*, the second by a Marshal of France. These lessons were not lost upon the nobility. Mésalliances were no more discredited, even the lowest, the most shameful, provided that the dot was sufficient. A Duke and Peer had married the daughter of an old charioteer. The Maréchal d'Estrées was the son-in-law of a *partisan* known under the name of Morin the Jew. Many others could be cited, for the tendency increased from year to year.

In 1665, the King having entered Parliament,² in order to confirm an edict, a group of men amongst whom was Olivier d'Ormesson were regarding the Tribune in which were seated the ladies of the Court. Some one thought of counting

¹ *Journal de deux jeunes Hollandais.*

² April 29th.

how many of these were daughters of parvenues or of business men ; he found three out of six. Two others were nieces of Mazarin, married to French nobles.¹ The single one of aristocratic descent was Mlle. d'Alençon, a half-sister of the Grande Mademoiselle. One could hardly have anticipated such figures, even allowing for chance.

The King, however, approved of this state of affairs and the nobility was ruined ; every one seized on what support he could. The general course of affairs was favourable to this confusion of rank. From the triumphal re-entry of Mazarin in 1653, until his death in 1661, a kind of universal freedom continued at the Court which surprised the ancient Frondeurs on their return from exile. The young monarch himself encouraged familiarities and lack of etiquette.

It was the nieces of the Cardinal who were largely responsible for these changes in manners and who gained their own profit through the additional freedom, since Marie, the third of the Mancini, was soon to almost touch the crown with the tip of her finger. Mademoiselle had some trouble in accustoming herself to the new manners towards the King.

For me [says she], brought up to have great respect, this is most astonishing, and I have remained long time without habituating myself to this new freedom. But when I saw how others acted, when the Queen told me one day that the

¹ To the Duc de Bouillon and to the son of the Marshal Duc de La Meilleraie, who took the title of Duc de Mazarin.

King hated ceremony, then I yielded; for without this high authority the faults of manner could not be possible with others.

The pompous Louis XIV. wearing the great wig of the portraits did not yet exist, and the Louvre of 1658 but little resembled the particular and formal Versailles of the time of Saint-Simon.¹

The licence extended to morals. Numbers of women of rank behaved badly, some incurred the suspicion of venality, and no faults were novelties; but vice keeps low company and it was this result which proud people like Mademoiselle could not suffer.

When it was related to her that the Duchesse de Châtillon, daughter of Montmorency-Boutteville, had received money from the Abbé Foucquet² and wiped out the debt by permitting such lackey-like jokes as breaking her mirrors with blows of the foot, she was revolted. "It is a strange thing," wrote she, "this difference of time; who would have said to the Admiral Coligny, 'The wife of your grandson will be maltreated by the Abbé Foucquet'?—he would not have believed it, and there was no mention at all of this name of Foucquet in his time."

In the mind of Mademoiselle, who had lived through so many periods, it was the low birth of the Abbé which would have affected the Admiral.

¹ It must not be forgotten that Saint-Simon was presented at Court in 1692. Louis XIV. was then fifty-four, and had reigned forty-nine years. Saint-Simon only knew the end of the reign.

² Brother of the Superintendent of Finances.

"Whatever may be said," added she, "I can never believe that persons of quality abandon themselves to the point which their slanderers say. For even if they did not consider their own safety, worldly honour is in my opinion so beautiful a thing that I do not comprehend how any one can despise it."

Mademoiselle did not transgress upon the respect due to the hierarchy of rank; for the rest, she contented herself with what are called the morals of respectable people, which have always been sufficiently lenient. She understood, however, all the difference between this morality and Christian principles.

The *Provinciales* (1656) had made it clear to the blindest that it was necessary to choose between the two. Mademoiselle had under this influence made a visit to Port Royal des Champs¹ and had been entirely won by these "admirable people" who lived like saints and who spoke and wrote "the finest eloquence," while the Jesuits would have done better to remain silent, "having nothing good to say and saying it very badly," "for assuredly there were never fewer preachers amongst them than at present nor fewer good writers, as appears by their letters. This is why for all sorts of reasons they would have done better not to write."

Seeing Mademoiselle so favourably impressed, one of the Monsieurs of Port Royal, Arnauld d'Andilly, said upon her departure, "You are going to the Court; you can give to the Queen account of

¹ In the summer of 1657.

what you have seen.”—“I assure you that I will willingly do this.”

Knowing her disposition, there is but little doubt that she kept her word; but this was all. The worthy Mademoiselle, incapable of anything low or base, did not dream for a second of allowing the austere morality, ill fitted for the needs of a court, to intervene in influencing her judgments upon others, or in the choice of her friends. She blamed the Duchesse de Châtillon for reasons with which virtue, properly named, had nothing to do. We see her soon after meeting Mme. de Montespan, because common morality has nothing to blame in a King's mistress.

Mme. de Sévigné agreed with Mademoiselle and they were not alone. This attitude gave a kind of revenge to the Jesuits.

Tastes became as common as sentiments; those of the King were not yet formed, and the pleasure taken in the ballet in the theatre of the Louvre injured the taste for what was, in fact, no longer tragedy. Corneille had given up writing for the first time in 1652, after the failure of his *Pertharite*. The following year, Quinault made his début and pleased. He taught in his tragi-comedies, flowery and tender, that “Love makes everything permissible,” which had been said by Honoré d'Urfé in *l'Astrée*, a half-century previous, and he retied, without difficulty, after the Corneillian parenthesis, the thread of a doctrine which has been transmitted without interruption to our own days.

Love justifies everything, for the right of passion is sacred, nothing subsists before it.

Dans l'empire amoureux,
Le devoir n'a point de puissance.

L'éclat de beaux yeux adoucit bien un crime ;
Au regard des amants tout paraît légitime.¹

The idea which this verse expresses can be found throughout the works of Quinault. He has said it again and again, with the same langourous, insinuating sweetness, for a period which lasted more than thirty years, and in the beginning no one very seriously divided with him the attention of the public.

At the appearance of his first piece in 1653, Racine was fourteen ; Molière did not return to Paris until 1658. Corneille, in truth, was preparing his return to the theatre ; but he found when his last tragedies were played, that he had done well to study Quinault, and in doing this he had not wasted his time;—a decisive proof of the echo to which souls responded,² and of the increasing immorality of the new era.

Thus the Court of France lost its prestige. The éclat cast by the Fronde upon the men and women seeking great adventures had been replaced by no new enthusiasms. The pleasures to which entire lives were devoted had not always been refining, as we have seen above, and people had not grown in

¹ *Vers d'Atys*, opera played in 1676, and *d'Astrate*, tragedy of 1663.

² The phrase is M. Jules Lemâitre's.

intelligence. The bold crowd of the Mazarins gave the tone to the Louvre, and this tone lacked delicacy. The Queen, Anne of Austria, groaned internally, but she had loosed the reins; except in the affair of her son's marriage she had nothing to refuse to the nieces of Cardinal Mazarin.

Because the Court was in general lazy and frivolous, a hasty opinion of the remainder of France should not be formed. The Court did not fairly represent the entire nation; outside of it there was room for other opinions and sentiments. It was during the years of 1650 to 1656, which appear to us at first sight almost a moral desert, that private charity made in the midst of France one of its greatest efforts, an effort very much to the honour of all concerned in it.

I have noticed elsewhere¹ the frightful poverty of the country during the Fronde. This distress which was changing into desert places one strip after another of French territory, must be relieved, and amongst those in authority no one was found capable of doing it.

It is hardly possible to represent to one's self to-day the condition left by the simple passage of an army belonging to a civilised people, through a French or German land, two or three hundred years ago.

¹ See *The Youth of La Grande Mademoiselle*. For this chapter cf. *La misère au temps de la Fronde et Saint-Vincent de Paul*, by Feillet; *La cabale des dévots*, by Raoul Allier; *Saint-Vincent de Paul*, by Emanuel Broglie; *Saint-Vincent de Paul et les Goudi*, by Chantelauze; *Port-Royal*, by Sainte-Beuve.

The idea of restricting the sufferings caused by war to those which are inevitable is a novel one. In the seventeenth century, on the contrary, the effort was to increase them. The chiefs for the most part showed a savage desire to excite the mania for destruction which is so easily aroused with soldiers during a campaign. Towards the end of the Fronde, some troops belonging to Condé, then in the service of the King of Spain, occupied his old province of Bourgogne. If any district of France could have hoped to be respected by the Prince, it was this one; his father had possessed it before him and it was full of their friends. Ties of this kind, however, were of no advantage. March 23, 1652, the States of Bourgogne wrote to M. de Bielle, their deputy at Court :

The enemies having already burned fourteen villages [the names follow], besides others since burned, these fire-fiends are still in campaign and continuing these horrible ravages, all which has been under the express order of M. le Prince, which the commandant [de la ville] de Seurre has received, to burn the entire Province if it be possible. The same Sieur de Bielle can judge by the account of these fires, to which there has so far been no impediment presented, in what state the Province will be in a short time.

The common soldier troubled himself little whether the sacked region was on the one or the other side of the frontier. He made hardly any difference.

Some weeks after the fires in Bourgogne, two armies tortured the Brie. The one belonged to

the King, the other to the Duc de Lorraine, and there was only a shade less of cruelty with the French forces than with the others. When all the troops had passed, the country was filled with charnel houses, and there are charnel houses and charnel houses.

That of Rampillon,¹ particularly atrocious, must be placed to the account of the Lorraines: "at each step one met mutilated people, with scattered limbs; women cut in four quarters after violation; men expiring under the ruins of burning houses, others spitted."² No trouble was taken to suppress these hells of infection.

It would be difficult to find any fashion of carrying on a war both more ferocious and more stupid. Some chiefs of divisions, precursors of humanitarian ideas, timidly protested, in the name of interest only, against a system which always gave to campaigning armies the plague, famine, and universal hatred. A letter addressed to Mazarin, and signed by four of these, Fabert at the head, supplicates him to arrest the ravages of a foreigner in the services of France, M. de Rosen. Mazarin took care to pay no attention to this protest: it would have been necessary first to pay Rosen and his soldiers. If it is expected to find any sense of responsibility in the State, in the opinion of contemporaries, for saving the survivors, left without bread, animals, nor harvests, without roof and with-

¹ Village of the arrondissement of Provins.

² Feillet, *La misère au temps de la Fronde*.

out working tools, there is disappointment ; the State held itself no more responsible for public disasters than for the poor, always with it.

The conception of social duty was not yet born. Public assistance was in its infancy, and the little which existed had been completely disorganised by the general disorders ; like everything else. Each city took care of its beggars or neglected them according to its own resources and circumstances. On the other hand, the idea of Christian charity had taken a strong hold upon some circles, under the combined influence of the Jansenism which exacted from its devotees a living faith ; of a secret Catholic society whose existence is one of the most curious historical discoveries of these last years¹ ; and of a poor saint whose peasant airs and whose patched *soutane* caused much laughter when he presented himself before the Queen. Vincent de Paul is easily recognised. Relations with great people had not changed him. It was said of him after years of Court society, " M. Vincent is always M. Vincent," and this was true : men of this calibre never change, happily for the world.

He became the keynote of the impulse which caused the regeneration of provincial life, almost ruined by the wars of the Fronde. Even after the work was ended it would be difficult to decide upon the share of each of these bodies in this colossal enterprise. The society to which allusion has been made was founded in 1627, by the Duc de

¹ See the volume of Raoul Allier, *La cabale des dévots*.

Ventadour, whose mystical thought had led him, as often happens, to essentially practical works. The name of *Compagnie du Saint Sacrement* was given it, and without doubt its supreme end was "to make honoured the Holy Sacrament."

Precisely on account of this, the society sought to "procure" for itself "all the good" in its power, for nothing is more profitable to religion than support, material as well as spiritual and moral, distributed under its inspiration and as one might say on its own part.

One passes easily from the practice of charity, a source of precious teaching, to the correction of manners. After comes the desire to control souls, which naturally leads to the destruction of heresies, with or without gentleness.

This programme was responsible for many admirable charitable works, two centuries in advance of current ideas, and, at the same time, for cruelties, infamies, all the vices inseparable from the sectarian spirit in which the end justifies the means.

Once started, the society rapidly increased, always hidden, and multiplying precautions not to be discovered, since neither clergy nor royalty were well disposed towards this mysterious force, from which they were constantly receiving shocks without being able to discover whence came the blows.

It was an occult power, analogous in its extent and its intolerance, and even in the ways and means employed, to the Free Masonry of the present.

The *Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement* had links

throughout France and in all classes. Anne of Austria was included in its sacred band and a shoemaker played in it an important rôle. Vincent de Paul enrolled himself in the ranks towards the year 1635, contributed to the good, and probably was ignorant of the evil to be found in its folds. Dating from his affiliation, his charitable works so mingled with those of the society that it was no longer to be recognised. The society brought to the Saint powerful succour, and aided him effectively in finding the support of which he had need ; it would be difficult to say from whom came the first idea of many good works.

As for what at present concerns us, however, the point of departure is known. It was neither Vincent de Paul nor the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement which conceived and put in train the prodigious work of relieving the Provinces. The first committee of relief was founded in Paris, in 1649, by a Janséniste, M. de Bernières, who was also responsible for the invention of the printed " Relations " which were informing all France of the miseries to be relieved. It was the first time that Charity had aided itself through publicity. It soon found the value of this. M. de Bernières and his committee, in which the wives of members of Parliament dominated, were soon able to commence in Picardie and Champagne the distribution of bread, clothing, grain, and working implements. Hospitals were established. They put an end to the frightful feeling of desolation of these unfortunate

populations, pillaged during so many years by mercenaries of all races and tongues. But the number of workers was small even if their zeal was great, and the Janséniste community was not equipped for a task of this dimension. From the end of the following year, the direction of the enterprise passed entirely into the hands of Vincent de Paul, who led with him his army of sisters of charity, his mission priests, and an entire contingent of allies, secret but absolutely devoted.

It does not seem as if at first there was any conflict. Mme. de Lamoignon and the Présidente de Herse were the right arms of M. Vincent as they had been of M. de Bernières. When the Queen of Poland,¹ a spiritual daughter of Port-Royal and brought up in France, wished to subscribe to the work, she sent her money to the Mother Angélique, telling her to communicate with M. Vincent. But this harmony was of short duration. The members of what the public were going to baptise with the sobriquet of "Cabale des Dévots," not being able to discover the real name, could not suffer the Janséniste concurrence in charitable works. They showered upon M. de Bernières a mass of odious calumnies and denunciations which resulted in the exile of this good man.

This was one of the most abominable of the bad actions to which a sectarian spirit has pushed human beings.

The "Relations" were continued under the direc-

¹ Marie de Gonzague.

tion of Vincent de Paul. One knows through them and through the documents of the time, the details of the task undertaken. The first necessity for the public health was the clearing the surface of the ground, in the provinces in which there had been fighting, of the putrifying bodies, and of the filthiness left by the armies. There was one village from which such an odour exhaled that no one would approach it. A "Relation" of 1652 describes in these terms the environs of Paris :

At Étréchy, the living are mingled with the dead, and the country is full of the latter. At Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, Crosne, Limay, one hundred and seventy-four ill people were found in the last extremity, with neither beds, clothes, nor bread.

It was necessary to commence by taking away the seeds of infection which increased the maladies, by interring the corpses of men, of dead horses and cattle, and removing the heaps of dirt which the armies had left behind. The cleansing of the soil was the specialty of M. Vincent and one of his most signal benefits. He employed for this work his mission priests and his sisters of charity. The missionaries placed themselves at the head of the workmen, the sisters sought the abandoned sick. Cloth and cap died at need "the arms in the hand," said their chief, but their work was good; and finally the work was taken hold of in the right way.

After the dead the living :

The curé of Boul¹ [reports another "Relation"] assures us that he buried three of his parishioners dead from hunger ; others were living only upon cut-up straw mixed with earth, of which was composed a food called bread. Five tainted and

¹ En Picardie.

decaying horses were devoured ; an old man aged seventy-five years had entered the presbytery to roast a piece of horse-flesh, the animal having died of scab fifteen days previously, was infected with worms, and had been found cast into a foul ditch. . . . At Saint-Quentin, in the faubourgs, in which the houses had been demolished, the missionaries discovered the last inhabitants in miserable huts, "in each of which," wrote one of them, "I found one or two sick, in one single hut ten ; two widows, each having four children, slept together on the ground, having nothing whatever, not even a sheet." Another Ecclesiastic, in his visit, having met with many closed doors, upon forcing them open discovered that the sick were too feeble to open them having eaten nothing during two days, and having beneath them only a little half rotten straw ; the number of these poor was so great that without succour from Paris, the citizens under the apprehension of a siege, not being able to nourish them, had resolved to cast them over the walls.

Millions were needed to relieve such distress, but Vincent de Paul and his associates had a better dream ; they wished to put these dying populations in a condition to work again and to undertake the reparation of the ruins themselves. The enterprise was organised in spite of obstacles which appeared insurmountable, the exhaustion of France and the difficulty of communication being the principal. The Parisians raised enormous sums and sent gifts of all kinds of materials, and found the means of transporting provisions. The committee divided the environs of Paris ; Mme. Joly took the care of one village ; the Présidente de Nesmond, four villages ; and so on. Missionaries were sent outside the boundaries. One of the

later biographers of Vincent de Paul¹ values at twelve millions of francs, at this date worth about sixty millions, the sums distributed, without counting money spent directly for the work of piety nor for the support of those engaged in it. However this may be, this latter body certainly consumed a large portion. The immensity of the enterprise, and its apparent boldness, gives us an idea of the wealth and power of the middle classes of the seventeenth century. After Vincent de Paul and M. de Bernières, the honour for this work of relief belongs to the parliamentary world and the Parisian bourgeoisie ; the aristocracy only playing a very secondary rôle. The middle classes provided for this enormous effort, at a period in which all revenues failed at once. We are told that many were forced to borrow, that others sold their jewels and articles of silver ; still this supposes luxury and credit. In one way or another, the citizen was in a position to give, while the small noble of Lorraine or of Beauce was obliged to receive ; and this emphasises an historic lesson. Gentlemen as well as peasants lacked bread. After remaining two days without eating, one is ready to accept alms ; at the end of three days, to demand them on account of the children. The decadence of the one class, the ascension of the other until their turn comes ; it has always been the same since the world began.

One last detail, and perhaps the most significant :

¹ M. Emanuel de Broglie.

There is no reference in the Memoirs of the times¹ to the principal work of Vincent de Paul. Their authors would have made it a matter of conscience not to forget a Court intrigue or a scandalous adventure ; but what can be interesting in people who are naked and hungry ? One avoids speaking of them. It is even better not to think of them. In 1652, the year in which poverty was at its height in oppressed Paris, the Mother Angelique wrote from Port-Royal, to the Queen of Poland (June 28th):

With the exception of the few actually engaged in charity, the rest of the world live in as much luxury as ever. The Court and the Tuileries are as thronged as ever, collations and the rest of the superfluities go on as always. Paris amuses itself with the same fury as if its streets were not filled with frightful spectacles. And, what is more horrible, fashion will not suffer the priests to preach penitence (Letter of July 12th).

The lack of pity for the poor was almost general among the so-called higher classes. There is no need of too carefully inquiring as to what is passing in hovels.

Vincent de Paul and his allies struggled six years. Not once did the government come to their aid, and the war always continued ; for one ruin relieved, the armies made ten others. The

¹ Saul in the *Journal des guerres civiles de Dubuisson-Aubenay*. He mentions the date of December 2, 1650, upon which "large donations" were sent into Champagne, by Mmes. de Lamoignon and de Herse, Messieurs de Bernières, Lenain, etc.

group of the "good souls" who had made these prodigious sacrifices was at length used up, as one might say, and was never reinforced, in spite of the inexhaustible source of devotion offered by the *Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement*. This body had been composed of men and women so exceptional in character, as well as in intelligence, that its ranks, emptied by death, and by the exhaustion of means and courage, could not be filled up. In 1655, the receipts of the committee were visibly diminished. Two years later, the resources were entirely exhausted and the work of relief remained unfinished.

It was well that it was attempted; a leaven of good has remained from it in the national soul.

The actual benefits however, were promptly effaced; the famine of 1659 to 1662, especially in the latter year, counts amongst the most frightful of the century, perhaps in our entire history. The excess of material poverty engendered immense moral misery, particularly in the large cities, in which luxury stood side by side with the most frightful conditions, and Paris became both excitable and evil, as always when it suffers.

The Carnival of 1660 was the most noisy and disorderly which old Parisians had ever known. Great and small sought amusement with a kind of rage, and dissensions and quarrels abounded from the top to the bottom of the social scale. Public places were noisy with riots and affrays. During

the nights, masks were masters of the streets, and as has been seen above, no security existed with these composite crowds, which stole candles from the houses into which they had surged.

One ball alone received in a single evening the visit of sixty-five masks, who ran through the city three nights in succession. These hysterics in Paris, while France was dying with hunger, are so much the more striking, inasmuch as the Court was not there to communicate to the outer world its eternal need of agitation and amusement. Louis XIV. spent a large portion of these critical years in journeying through his kingdom. One of the first journeys, lasting from October 27th to the following January 27th, had for its end the meeting of the Princess of Savoie at Lyons. There had been some question of marrying this Princess to the young King. On passing to Dijon, the Court stopped more than fifteen days. Mademoiselle tells us the reason for this delay; it is not very glorious for royalty. The Parliament of Dijon refused to register certain edicts which aggravated the burdens of the province. Le Tellier, "on the part of the King," promised that there should be no more difficulty if the states of Bourgogne would bring their subsidy to a sum which was indicated. "Upon which they agreed to what was demanded and presented themselves to account to the King."

Upon the next day, with a cynical contempt for the royal promise, "Her Majesty went to the Dijon

Parliament to register the deeds.”¹ Mademoiselle had the curiosity to be present at the session. The first president did the only thing in his power. He courageously expressed his “regrets” and was praised by all those who heard him.

The Court hastily departed the following day, leaving Dijon and the entire province “in a certain consternation.” Mademoiselle blamed only the manner of action. At the bottom of her heart, she had the belief of her times : that the sovereign owed only control to his people, and that there was no question of giving them happiness.

Some weeks after the incident at Lyons, the vicinity of the principality of Dombes² gave her the desire to visit this place, which she had never seen. Dombes did not pay any impost to the King, and this fact alone sufficed to render it prosperous. Mademoiselle was scandalised at this prosperity. The peasants were well clothed, “they ate meat four times a day,” and there were “no really poor people” in the country ; “also,” pursued Mademoiselle, “they, up to this time, have paid no duties, and it would perhaps be better that they should do so, for they are do-nothings, taking no interest in either work or trade.”

The people had left everything and dressed themselves in their fine clothes to receive Made-

¹ The Parliament of Dijon had a bad reputation with the ministers, who accused it of refusing all reform. This does not excuse such a lack of good faith.

² Dombes was a small independent principality which had only been definitely united to France on March 28, 1782 ; its capital was Trévoux.

moiselle. In order to thank them, Mademoiselle drew from them all the money she could. It is necessary to recollect, however, that in the eyes of the great, even those of the better sort, a peasant was hardly a man. It would hardly be worth while for us to be indignant at this attitude. We now admit that the so-called superior races have the right to exploit those considered inferior, and thus at need destroy them. It was the habit of our fathers to treat a lower class as to-day we treat a less advanced race; the sentiment is precisely the same.

Upon her return from Dombes, Mademoiselle found the Court again at Lyons. Every one was all eyes and ears for a spectacle which might derange the admitted ideas of kings. Marie Mancini was trying to make Louis XIV. marry her, and the attempt had not so absurd an air as might be imagined. The Savoie project had failed under painful conditions, which gave subject of thought to the courtiers. The King had conducted himself like an ill-bred man to the Princess Marguerite.

People were demanding whether the Spanish marriage was also going to fail, and with it the so greatly desired peace, because it pleased two lovers, one of whom ought not to have forgotten his kingly duties, to proclaim the sovereign rights of passion. Anne of Austria became uneasy. Mazarin, yielding to temptation, left the field to his niece, who "took possession" of the young King with looks and speech. She fascinated him, and he

swore all that she wished. The contest was not an equal one between the passionate Italian and the timid and somewhat unformed Louis XIV.

On his return from Lyons, Louis knelt down before his mother and Mazarin, supplicating them to permit him to marry the one he loved. He found them inflexible. The Queen realised that such a *mésalliance* would cast disrepute on royalty. The Cardinal was torn by conflicting emotions, but in the end sent away his niece.

A second journey lasted more than a year. The Court set out on June 29, 1659, and passed through Blois. It stopped with Gaston. We owe to the *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle a last glimpse of this Prince, formerly so brilliant, now become a lazy good-for-nothing in his provincial life, where nothing of Parisian fashion was found; neither toilettes nor cooking, nor household elegance, nor even Monsieur himself, who no longer knew how to receive, and was vexed that the King should kill his pheasants. He permitted it to be seen that he was put out, and this became so plain that every one was eager to depart, and there was a sudden scattering.

The eldest of his daughters by his last marriage, Marguerite D'Orléans, had a great reputation for beauty. Her parents had for a long time anticipated seeing her Queen of France.

On the night of the King's arrival at Blois, this damsel was disfigured with mosquito bites. Her dancing was much extolled, but on this special

evening, she danced very badly. Gaston had announced that this little girl of ten "would astonish every one with her brilliant conversation." No one could draw a single word from her. In short, nothing succeeded. Mademoiselle was not especially vexed at this failure; she had trembled at the thought of seeing her younger sister "above her."

Hardly had the Court remounted their carriages, before the royal cavalcade, according to the universal custom, commenced to mock its hosts. The King joked at the sight of his uncle's face on seeing the pheasants fall dead. Mademoiselle laughed with the others. She had, however, been moved by a tender scene played by her father.

He had come to awaken her at four o'clock in the morning :

He seated himself on my bed and said: "I believe that you will not be vexed at being waked since I shall not soon have the chance of again seeing you. You are going to take a long journey. I am old, exhausted; I may die during your absence. If I do die, I recommend your sisters to you. I know very well that you do not love Madame: that her behaviour towards you has not been all it should be; but her children have had nothing to do with this, for my sake take care of them. They will have need of you; as for Madame, she will be of little help to them."

He embraced me three or four times. I received all this with much tenderness; for I have a good heart. We separated on the best terms, and I went again to sleep.

Mademoiselle believed that at length they again loved each other. Six weeks later a scandal broke out at the Court of France, then at Bordeaux.

The Duc de Savoie had refused to marry the Princess Marguerite d'Orléans, and Mademoiselle was accused of having secretly written to him that her sister was a humpback. The accusation came from Gaston himself, who said that he had proof of it. This was a most disagreeable incident for Mademoiselle and further illusion was impossible; Gaston was always Gaston, the most dangerous man in France.

From Bordeaux, the Court went to Toulouse; there it was rejoined by Mazarin, who had just signed the peace of the Pyrénées (November 7, 1659).

All histories give the articles of this peace. The results for Europe have been summed up in some brilliant lines written by the great German historian, Leopold Ranke, who had been struck with the advantages which this treaty gave France over Germany :

If it were necessary to characterise in a general fashion the results of this peace . . . we would say that the importance of the treaty consisted in the formation and extension of the great (geographically) military system of the French monarchy. On all sides, to the Pyrénées, to the Alps, above all, to the frontiers of the German Empire and of the Netherlands, France acquired new fortified points . . . many positions as important for defence as favourable for attack. The position of France upon the upper Rhine, which it owes to the peace of Westphalia, received by this new treaty its greatest extension.¹

Mazarin found that he had done well in himself

¹ *Histoire de France*. Tr. by Jacques Porchat and Miot. Paris, 1886.

following the campaigning armies. He knew the military importance of most of the places. The Spanish negotiator could not have said as much. In the interior, the first comer could easily comprehend the political benefits of a treaty which should as far as possible abolish the past. Condé had been included in the terms of the peace and returned to France, well resolved to keep quiet. He rejoined the Court at Aix, January 27, 1660, and found there was a certain curiosity exhibited as to how he would be received.

Mademoiselle hastened to Anne of Austria: "My niece," said the Queen to her, "return to your own dwelling; M. le Prince has especially asked that I should be absolutely alone when I first receive him."

I began to smile with vexation, but said: "I am nobody; I believe that M. le Prince will be very astonished if he does not find me here." The Queen insisted in a very sharp tone; I went away resolved to complain to M. le Cardinal; this I did on the following day, saying that if such a thing happened again, I should leave the Court. He made many excuses. This was Mazarin's system. He poured forth explanations but in no way changed his methods in the future.

It is known that M. le Prince demanded pardon on his knees, and that he found before him in Louis XIV. a judge grave and cold, who held himself "very straight."¹ To fight against the King was decidedly no more to be considered a joke; it

¹ *Mémoires de Montglat; Mémoires de Mme. de Motteville.*

could not be overlooked, even if one were the conqueror of Rocroy.

Mademoiselle did not succeed in comprehending the real situation. Condé, surprised and deceived, felt his way. One evening at a dance, when talking with Mademoiselle, the King joined them. The conversation fell upon the Fronde. On the part of a man of as much *esprit* as M. le Prince, one can well believe that this was not by chance: "The war was much spoken of," relates Mademoiselle, "and we joked at all the follies of which we had been guilty, the King with the best grace in the world joining in these pleasantries. Although I was suffering with a severe headache, I was not in the least bored." Mademoiselle had laughed without any second thoughts. Condé, clearer sighted, trembled during the remainder of his days, before this monarch so capable of dissimulation, and so perfectly master of himself.

Almost at the same moment there expired another of those belated feudal ideas, which neither royalty nor manners could any longer suffer among the nobility. Gaston d'Orléans died at Blois, February 2nd,¹ his death being caused by an attack of apoplexy. They had heard him murmur from his bed regarding his wife and children, *Domus mea domus desolationis vocabitur* ("My house will be called the House of Desolation"). He spoke better than he knew. Madame surpassed herself in

¹ The ball took place on the 3rd. Several days elapsed before the news of the death reached Aix.

blunders, and still more. She went to dinner while her husband was receiving the last unction, sent away the servants of Monsieur immediately after the final sigh, locked up everything, and concerned herself no more. Her women refused a sheet in which to wrap the body; it was necessary to beg one from the ladies of the Court. Some priests came to sit up with the dead, but finding neither "light nor fire" they returned, and the corpse remained alone, more completely abandoned than had been that of his brother, the King, Louis XIII. The body was borne without "pomp or expense"¹ to Saint-Denis, and the widow hastened to Paris, to take possession of the Palace of the Luxembourg, in the absence of Mademoiselle.

The Court did not take the trouble to feign regrets. The King gave the tone in saying to his cousin, gaily, after the first formal compliments: "You will see my brother to-morrow in a training mantle. I believe that he is delighted at the news of your father's death. He believes that he is heir to all his belongings and state; he can talk of nothing else; but he must wait awhile."

Anne of Austria heard this, and smiled. "It is true," pursues Mademoiselle, "that Monsieur appeared the next day in a wonderful mantle." Mademoiselle had great difficulty in keeping her own countenance. Her grief was, however, very real, notwithstanding the past, or rather, perhaps, on account of what had gone before; it was, however,

¹ *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle.

only an impulse affected by the impression of the moment. She exhibited this sorrow a little too effectively :

I wished to wear the most formal and deepest mourning. Every one of my household was clad in black, even to the cooks, the servants, and the valets; the coverings of the mules, all the caparisons of my horses and of the other beasts of burden. Nothing could be more beautiful the first time we marched than to see this grand train, expressive of grief. It had an air very magnificent and of real grandeur. Everybody says how much wealth she must possess!

The mules' mourning is well worth the training mantle of the little Monsieur. This magnificent funeral pomp had the one inconvenience of recalling to all comers that Mademoiselle must resign other pleasures. At the end of some weeks, she would have willingly resumed her share in Court gaieties; Anne of Austria kindly commanded her to return to life.

The summer was, however, approaching. The Court continued to drag itself from city to city, waiting until it should please the King of Spain to bring his daughter, and the time seemed long. Mazarin shut himself up to work. Louis drilled the soldiers of his guard. The Queen Mother spent long days in convents. Mademoiselle wrote, or worked tapestry. A large number of the courtiers, no longer able to stand the ennui, had returned to Paris; those who remained, lived lives of complete idleness. The King had at this time a fine occasion to study the condition of his provinces; but

he did not possess an investigating mind. He spent long months in front of the Pyrénées, without seeking to know anything of their formation, showing an unusual indifference to knowledge, even for this period. One of the few persons who risked themselves in the Pyrénées, Mme. de Motteville, relates her astonishment at discovering valleys, torrents, cultivated fields, and inhabitants. She had believed that she should only find a great wall of rock, "deserted and untilled."

The journey went on; but nature had not yet the right of entrance into literature, and society spoke but rarely of its charms. Of the vast world, only what came directly under the eyes of the individual was known.

At length, on June 2d (1660), the Court of France, "kicking its heels" at Saint-Jean-de-Luz during an entire month, received news of the arrival at Fontarabia of Philip IV. and of the Infanta Marie Thérèse. The next day, the marriage ceremonies commenced.

Six long days and the best intentions on both sides were needed to consummate this great affair without offending etiquette. The problem presented was this: How to marry the King of France with the daughter of the King of Spain, without permitting the King of France to put his foot on Spanish territory, nor the King of Spain on that belonging to France, and at the same time not to allow the Infanta to quit her father before the ceremony had actually taken place?

On the side of the French Court, whose discipline left much to be desired, difficulties of detail arose constantly to complicate affairs. The little Monsieur wept for desire to go to Fontarabia to see a Spanish ceremony; but etiquette made it necessary to consider this brother of the King the present heir presumptive to the crown, and, alleged Louis XIV., "the heir presumptive of Spain could not enter France to see a ceremony."¹

After consideration of this point, the heir was forbidden to pass the frontier. Then Mademoiselle arrived, who wished to be of the party. She represented that the order was not applicable to her, and cited the Salic law which gave her the right to traverse the Bidassoa: "I do not inherit," said she; "I should have some compensation. Since daughters are of no value in France, they should at least be permitted to enjoy spectacles."

Mazarin convoked the ministers to submit this argument. The discussion lasted "three or four hours." Finally, Mademoiselle gained her cause, although the King himself was rather against her. The important question of "trains" gave also some embarrassment to the Cardinal. A duke had offered to bear the train of Mademoiselle in the nuptial cortège. Mazarin was obliged to seek two other dukes for the younger sisters of Mademoiselle, two children whom the lady of honour of their mother had led to the marriage. He could only find a marquis and a count; the dukes hid

¹ *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle.

themselves. The lady of honour uttered loud protests; "her Princesses must have 'tail-bearers' as titled as those of their tall sister, or they should not go at all." "I will do what I can," replied the Cardinal; "but no one wishes the task."

Mademoiselle had the good grace to sacrifice her duke, and Mazarin believed the affair terminated, when the Princess Palatine¹ caused a novel incident, upon the day of the ceremony, and even when the last moment was approaching. She appeared in the Queen's chamber, wearing a train, to which, being a foreign Princess, she had no right. La Palatine had counted upon the general confusion to smuggle herself in and to create a precedent. It was needful to delay matters. The train had been reported to Mademoiselle, and no marriage should prevent her protest. The Cardinal and after him the King were forced to listen to a discourse upon the limitations of foreign princesses. "I believe," writes Mademoiselle, "that I was very eloquent." She proved herself at least very convincing, for La Palatine received the order to take off her train.

But it is necessary to retrace our steps; trains have carried us too far. The relations between the two monarchs had been regulated with a minutia worthy of Asiatic courts. They met only in a hall, built expressly for the purpose upon the Isle des Faisans, and on horseback upon the frontier. The building was half in French, half in Spanish territory. The

¹ Anne de Gonzague.

decorations of the two sides were different. Louis XIV. must walk upon French carpets, Philip IV. upon Spanish ones. The one must only sit upon a French chair, write only upon a French table with French ink, seek the time only from a French clock, placed in his half of the hall; the other guarded himself with the same care from every object not Spanish. Two opposite doors gave passage at precisely the same instant. An equal number of steps led them to the place where the red carpet of France joined the gold and silver one of Spain; and the two Kings addressed each other and embraced over the frontier. Thus demanded the laws of ceremonial monarchy. Their rigour commenced to astonish the good people of France. The interviews upon the Isle des Faisans became legendary. La Fontaine has alluded to them in one of his last fables, *Les Deux Chèvres*,¹ in which he has found no better comparison for the solemnity with which the two goats, equally "tainted" with their rank, equally curbed, advanced towards each other upon the fragile and narrow bridge.

Je m'imagine voir, avec Louis le Grand,
Philippe quatre qui s'avance
Dans l'isle de la Conférence *
Ainsi s'avançaient pas à pas,
Nez à nez, nos aventurières.

¹ This appeared in 1691.

* Isle des Faisans was also called *Isle de la Conférence*, since Mazarin had there discussed the treaty of the Pyrénées with Luis de Haro.

When all was arranged, on June 3rd, neither the bride and bridegroom nor their parents having seen each other, the King of France, represented by Don Luis de Haro, was married by proxy in the church of Fontarabia to the Infanta Marie-Thérèse.

This was the expedient which saved the dignity of the two crowns. After the ceremony, the new Queen returned to her father. She wrote the next day a letter of official compliment to her husband. We possess the response of Louis XIV., in which he has well performed a somewhat difficult task.

SAINT-JEAN-DE-LUZ, June 4, 1660.

To receive at the same time a letter from your Majesty, and the news of the celebration of our marriage, and to be on the eve of seeing you, these are assuredly causes of indelible joy for me.

My cousin, the Duke of Créqui, first gentleman of my chamber, whom I am sending expressly to your Majesty, will communicate to you the sentiments of my heart, in which you will remark always increasingly an extreme impatience to convey these sentiments in person.

He will also present to you some trifles on my part.

The same day, in the afternoon, Anne of Austria met for the first time with her brother and niece together. The interview took place in the hall of the Isle des Faisans. Philip IV. astonished the French, decidedly less bound up in tradition than the Spanish. Philip dwelt so immobile in his gravity that one would have hardly taken him for a living man.¹

¹ *Mémoires de Montglat.*

Anne of Austria wishing to embrace her brother, whom she had not seen for forty-five years, he decided to make a movement, but it was only "to withdraw his head so far that she could not catch it."¹ The Queen Mother had forgotten the customs of her own land. To embrace in Spain was not to kiss; it only consisted in giving a greeting without touching the lips, as we see done at the Comédie Française by personages of the classic repertoire. Kissing was, as we read in Molière only permitted in certain rare cases. In the *Malade Imaginaire*, Thomas Diafoirus consults his father before kissing his fiancée: "Shall I kiss her?" "Yes," replies M. Diafoirus.

The evening of the interview, June 4th, Mademoiselle was curious to know whether the King of Spain had kissed the Queen Mother. "I asked her; she told me 'no'; that they had embraced according to the fashion of their own country."

How was this strange fashion established at the Court of France, and from there transferred to our theatres? Was it after the marriage of Louis XIV.? I leave to the amateurs of the theatre the solving of this little problem in dramatic history.

They brought a French chair for the Queen Mother, a Spanish one for Philip IV., and they seated themselves nearly "upon the line which separated the two kingdoms."²

Marie-Thérèse, Infanta of Spain and bride by

¹ *Mémoires de Mme. de Motteville.*

² *Ibid.*

proxy of the King of France, was still to be seated. Should this be done in France or Spain? upon a Spanish or French chair? They brought one Spanish and two French cushions; piled them upon Spanish territory, and the young Queen found herself seated in a mixed fashion, suitable to her ambiguous situation.

Louis XIV. did not accompany his mother. Etiquette did not yet permit the new couple to address a word to each other. It had been arranged that the King of France should ride along the banks of the Bidassoa and that the Infanta should regard him from afar through the window. A romantic impatience which seized the husband with longing to become acquainted with his wife caused this part of the programme to fail. Louis XIV. looked at Marie-Thérèse through a half-open door. They regarded each other some seconds, and then returned, she to Fontarabia, he to Saint-Jean-de-Luz.

On Sunday, the sixth, they saw each other officially at the Isle des Faisans. Affairs were but little further advanced; Philip IV. had declared that the Infanta must conceal her impressions until she arrived on French territory. On the seventh, Anne of Austria brought her daughter-in-law to Saint-Jean-de-Luz, where the young people could at length converse together, awaiting the definite celebration of the marriage, which took place June 9th in the church of Saint-Jean-de-Luz.

Some days later, the Court retook the road to

Paris. Marie-Thérèse made her solemn entrance into the capital, August 20th. The procession departed from Vincennes. "It was necessary to rise at four o'clock in the morning," reports Mademoiselle, who had a frightful sick headache. At five o'clock, every one was in gala costume, and they reached the Louvre at seven in the evening. Mademoiselle was at the end of her endurance; but a Princess of the blood had no right to be ill on the day of a Queen's entrance. Sometimes ridiculous and sometimes ferocious; such appears ancient etiquette to our democratic generation. Monarchs formerly felt the value of its services too keenly to shrink from submitting to its dictates. They knew that a demi-god never descends with impunity from his pedestal. It is impossible to witness his efforts at remounting without laughter. To-day the Princes themselves desire less etiquette. The monarchical sentiment is not sufficiently strong to make them willing to support the ennui of ceremonial; they are capable of any sacrifice of dignity to escape it. We see them resign to others their rank and privileges in the hope of finding in obscurity the happiness which they have missed in the King's palace.

The present lack of form makes it difficult for the mass to take royalty seriously, and thus vanish together the respect for formal courtesies and for aristocracies. Louis XIV. and Philip IV. in spite of La Fontaine, were in the right in attaching capital importance to the placing their feet upon the

right carpets. This precision of etiquette prolonged the existence of the monarchy.

Life retook its habitual course in the Palace of the Louvre. The King was studying a new ballet. Very few persons remarked that he found time also to make long visits upon Mazarin. The Cardinal, feeling himself in the clutches of death, was preparing his pupil for his "great trade" of sovereign. He made him acquainted with affairs, spoke to him in confidence of the people connected with the administration of the kingdom; discussed political questions, and recommended him to have no longer a first minister.¹ The one thing which he could not yet resolve to do was to permit the King to give a direct order. His dying hands would not let fall a half-crown or relax an atom of authority.

The young Queen was astonished at the money restrictions which had oppressed her since her sojourn in France; Mazarin supervised her household through the intermediary of Colbert, "who saved upon everything,"² and he (Mazarin) pocketed the savings. On New Year's day, he absorbed for himself three-fourths of the gifts of Marie-Thérèse. The Queen Mother having shown some discontent, "the poor Monsieur the Cardinal," as she called him, cried out boldly, "Alas! if she knew from whence comes this money and that it is the blood of the people, she would not be so liberal."

¹ There exists in the *Archives d' Affaires étrangères* a fragment of the instructions of Mazarin to Louis XIV., written under the dictation of the King. M. Chantelauze, who discovered it, published it in the *Correspondant* of August 10, 1881.

² Motteville.

In vain Mazarin hastened ; he did not have time to finish his task. February 11, 1661, the King, realising that his minister was lost, began to weep and to say that he did not know what he should do. All France experienced the same fears. It did not occur to any that the King was capable of governing, or that he would take the trouble to do so. The doubt was only as to the name of the one who should take the helm in place of the Cardinal. Anne of Austria believed in chance ; Condé had one party amongst the nobility. The Parisian bourgeoisie said to itself that Retz was perhaps going to return from over sea "for necessity."¹ The ministers admitted that there was only one man fitted for the position.

While these various intrigues were progressing, Mazarin expired (March 6th), and some hours later there came that *coup de théâtre* of which one reads in all histories. Louis XIV. signified to his ministers and grandees his intention of himself governing. Those who knew him well, beginning with his own mother, did nothing but laugh, persuaded that it was only a fire of straw. Louis at first shut himself up entirely alone during two hours, in order to establish a "rule of life"² as an effective monarch. The programme resulting from this meditation surprisingly resembles the one given by Catherine de Médicis in the letter already cited. It exacts the qualities of a great worker. From that day, Louis showed these qualities. "For above all," says he in

¹ Guy Patin. Letter of January 28, 1661.

² Motteville.

his *Mémoires*, "I resolved not to have a first minister, and not to permit to be filled by another the functions belonging to the King, as long as I bear the title."

The passage in which he describes his "wedding" with the joy of work is moving and beautiful. It is even poetical.

I felt immediately my spirit and courage elevated. I found myself a different individual. I discovered in myself a mind which I did not know existed, and I reproached myself for having so long ignored this joy. The timidity which judgment at first gave caused me pain, above all when it was necessary to speak in public a little lengthily. This timidity, however, was dissipated little by little.

At length it seemed to me I was really King and born to rule. I experienced a sense of well-being difficult to express.

Louis would now have need of all his courage. In measure as his mind became "elevated," shame for his gross ignorance overcame him. "When reason," says he, "commences to become solid, one feels a cutting and just chagrin in finding oneself ignorant of what all others know."

The practical utility of his neglected studies was realised by him. Not to know history with his "trade" was a difficulty felt every instant. Not to be capable of deciphering alone a Latin letter when Rome and the Empire wrote their dispatches only in Latin, was an insupportable slavery to others. Never to have read anything upon the "art of war" when the ambition was aroused to become an expert in this art and to acquire glory through it,

“was to put brakes on one’s own wheels.” The young King’s education must be remade ; the only difficulty was the finding sufficient leisure. He would not allow himself to be hindered by other difficulties, of which the principal one was the danger of hazarding the newly acquired authority by returning to the schoolroom.

Louis XIV. braved public opinion with remarkable courage. This is one of the finest periods of his life. He proved himself truly great by his sentiment of professional duty, and by his empire over himself, the day upon which he dared to say to himself as the bourgeois gentleman of Molière was forced to say, knowing well the ridicule to which he was exposed : “I wish . . . to be able to reason among intelligent people.”

In order to do him full justice, it is necessary to remember the foolish effect at that date produced by a scholar of twenty-three.¹ Classes were then finished at fifteen or sixteen, and the memory of them was inseparably connected with birch rods, without whose aid there was no teaching in the seventeenth century. When it was known that the King was again taking Latin lessons from his ancient preceptor, and that he passed hours in writing themes, the courtiers might easily have had it upon the end of their tongues to demand as Mme. Jourdain of M. Jourdain : “Are you at your age going to college to be whipped?”

¹ He was even twenty-four when he asked Péréfixe again to give him Latin lessons.

He did not console himself with the illusion that his rank would save him from such railleries. He confesses *à propos* of history, which he wished to study again, how keenly sensitive he was to the thought of what might be said. "One single scruple embarrassed me, which was, that I had a certain shame, considering my position in the world, of redescending into an occupation to which I should earlier have devoted myself." Everything had yielded to the desire "not to be deprived of the knowledge that every worthy man should have."

In spite of these efforts, Louis was never educated; he never knew Latin, which was deemed the real knowledge of the seventeenth century, in which century the language was well taught. Too much business or too many pleasures prevented the young King from pursuing his design during a sufficiently long period. It is possible, also, that his lack of natural facility may have discouraged him. Louis XIV. had memory and judgment, but his intelligence was slow. In short, he abandoned his studies too soon; he felt, and repeated till the day of his death the confession, "I am ignorant."

But Louis never relaxed the labours belonging to him as chief of the State. His days were regulated once for all. Mme. de Motteville tells the arrangement the day following the death of Mazarin. Saint-Simon gives it again a half-century later, and it is identical. Apart from extraordinary and unexpected business, and formal functions, so numerous and important at this epoch, the King

regularly devoted six to eight hours daily to ordinary business. Add to these hours the time for sleeping and eating, for seeing his family and taking the fresh air, and but little time would have been left for diversion if the King had not had the capacity of doing without sleep almost at will. It was this physical gift which permitted him to provide as largely for pleasure as for work. Nevertheless, the Court had trouble in adapting itself to the new régime. It did not know what to do while the King worked.

"It is more wearisome here than can be imagined," wrote the Duc d'Enghien, son of the great Condé, in 1664. "The King is shut up almost the entire afternoon."¹ Outside the Court, the people could have cried with joy. It had been a delightful surprise to discover a great worker in this ballet dancer. Paris was ready to permit him to indulge in his little weaknesses, provided that he would govern, that he himself would use his power. The bourgeoisie Frondeuse was disarmed.

It is necessary [wrote Guy Patin to a friend] that I should share with you a thought which I find very amusing. M. de Vendome has said that our good King resembles a young doctor who has much ardour for his profession, but who demands some *quid pro quo*. I know those who see him intimately, who have assured me that he has very good intentions and, that as soon as he is *completely the master*, he will persuade all the world of them. Amen.²

¹ Letter of June 27th to the Queen of Poland (*Archives de Chantilly*). The King dined at one o'clock.

² Letter of July 15, 1661.

The italicised words are significant of the opinion of Guy Patin. In establishing absolute monarchy, Louis XIV. had the good wishes of all. Other testimony quite as remarkable exists to confirm this statement. After the death of Mazarin, Olivier d' Ormesson, who had been of the opposition party in the Parliament, and whose independence would soon cost him his career, let three entire years roll by before admitting any statement in his journal to the detriment of the King. This writer also believes in Louis, and, on the whole, approves of the compensations (*quid pro quo*) demanded by the governing novice.

After the first astonishment, the sudden change in Louis's methods provoked but few commentaries in the immediate surroundings of the King. Anne of Austria had a fit of vexation in realising that she would never again have any influence ; after which, indolence aiding, her course was taken. The Queen Mother had no objection on principle to absolute monarchy : she had always favoured it. She could not, as a Spanish Princess, conceive of royalty being the least limited. Once resigned to the new situation, she became a truly maternal old Queen, who preached virtue to youth, and endeavoured to lighten the monotony of her daughter-in-law's life.

Marie - Thérèse had only one single political opinion ; good government was that under which a king could pass much time with his wife. This poor little wife died without having ever really lived with her husband.

Mademoiselle had no reason to regret the first ministers ; there had been too little reason to enjoy the two with whom she had had intercourse. She imagined herself liberated from all dependence through the death of the Cardinal, succeeding that of her father, and this thought was most agreeable to her. She did not perceive that she had only changed masters, and that the new one would prove himself infinitely more difficult to please, more exacting, than that sceptical Italian who confined himself to watching that she did not carry away her millions to strangers and who simply mocked at everything else.

Mademoiselle finally passed through the state of apprenticeship to absolute monarchy. Her eyes were opened only on the day on which the thunder cloud burst upon her.

CHAPTER III

Mademoiselle at the Luxembourg—Her Salon—The “Anatomies” of the Heart—Projects of Marriage, and New Exile—Louis XIV. and the Libertines—Fragility of Fortune in Land—*Fêtes Galantes*.

WITH the approach of her thirty-fifth year, the Grande Mademoiselle perceived by diverse signs that she was no longer young. She was forced to recognise that her strength had its limitations, which fact had never before been forced upon her. On February 7, 1662, Louis XIV. danced for the first time a grand ballet entitled the “Amours of Hercules,” and his cousin of Montpensier took part. She was ill from fatigue. Another kind of weariness overcame her; she became bored with fêtes. She had been present at so many gala occasions since her entrance into the world, and had seen so many festivals and fireworks, garlands of flowers and allegorical chariots, that she was now quickly satiated.

The King still loved this kind of abundant pleasure; those which he offered to his Court sometimes lasted successive days and nights, without giving time to breathe, and all being expected to feel continued amusement. Mademoiselle was no longer capable of this. She was beginning to long for the repose of home. Her sick headaches contributed

to this disability ; age had increased them, and all women know that it is better to suffer a headache in solitude. After a lively struggle, she had returned to the palace of the Luxembourg and was lodging under the same roof as her stepmother. The old Madame would have gladly relinquished a neighbour whose presence presaged nothing good, but no one had sustained the contention as no one was in the least interested in her welfare. One reads in a fugitive leaf of the times issued on July 21, 1660: " This affair was deliberated upon in the Court, and it was found that Mademoiselle had the right to demand one of the apartments free, and that Madame could not refuse it." It is said that the King wrote to Madame in order to soften the blow ; it was necessary to drain the bitter cup to the dregs, and at a time in which Madame had great need of tranquillity to install at her very door this tempestuous stepdaughter, with whom no peace was possible.

Madame had " vapours," otherwise called a nervous malady. She was afraid of noise, of movement, and of being forced to speak, and Mademoiselle insisted upon making " scenes." " I teased her often," says the Princess in her *Mémoires*, " and very much despised her (in which I was wrong), and she always responded as one who feared me, and with much submission." The public did not consider it worth while to waste pity upon Madame, because she bored every one ; a fault never pardoned. Anne of Austria, herself a

very amiable woman, when not opposed, could never suffer her inoffensive sister-in-law. The Queen Mother said to Mademoiselle, who did not need this encouragement: "Her person, her temper, and her manners are odious to me." The public was fundamentally right in its antipathy. Madame was one of those people who render virtue hateful, and in thus doing are very injurious to humanity.

The Luxembourg was commodious and gay. Mademoiselle enjoyed it, and it pleased her to arrange for herself a grand existence as a Princess, rich and independent. Nothing could be more displeasing to the Court. As soon as Louis XIV. had assumed full power, he let it be seen that he wished no social centre in his kingdom other than his own palace. His cousin did not take this fact into account. This was not bravado. It was due to the impossibility of comprehending that "a person of her quality" could be reduced to the rôle of satellite.

It is certain that nature had not prepared her for this rôle. "I would rather pass my life in solitude," wrote she, "than restrain in any way my proud humour, even at the expense of my fortune. I have no complaisance, and I demand a great deal from others."¹ She also adds: "I do not willingly praise others and very rarely blame myself." With this avowed disposition, it would perhaps have been wiser not to go too often to the Louvre. It was a

¹ "*Portrait de Mademoiselle fait par elle-même*" (Nov., 1657) in *La Galerie des Portraits de Mademoiselle de Montpensier*, edited by Édouard de Barthélemy (Paris, 1860).

great imprudence to attract the crowd to herself as she had done at the time in which she was openly opposing the Tuileries.

The salon of Mademoiselle became the first in Paris, the most interesting and select. Since Paris had tasted the pleasures of clever conversation and discovered, under the direction of Mme. de Rambouillet, the genius of this delicate art, it could not do without it. The initiator was still living, but she was old and ill, and her circle had long been dispersed.¹

Mlle. de Scudéry had collected together as many of the remnants of her first salon as she could, and had thus laid the foundation for the famous Saturdays, at which wit and knowledge were dispensed in abundance. Nevertheless, it was not the same. The Saturdays of "Sapho" brought back the literary people to the pedantry from which Mme. de Rambouillet had more or less delivered them. They were left too much to themselves, and, thus isolated, they had lost a certain intellectual grace acquired by the friction between the aristocrats and the blue-stockings.

The mind as well as the body has its own manners, and they may be bad or good. In 1661, the Court alone had breeding. There existed no other society in which the first comer understood how to speak a language easy and *galant*, well adapted to plumed hats and elegant bows. These belonged

¹ Mme. de Rambouillet died very aged in 1665. Her influence ended in 1650.

to the traditions of the place. Such courtesies were lacking with the learned friends of Mlle. de Scudéry, who no longer felt themselves spurred on by the fine gentlemen, so alert, capable of such light raileries, and detesting pedants.

The feminine society of the Saturdays had also too little intercourse with duchesses and marquises to replace the Hôtel Rambouillet. Mlle. Bocquet, who filled a large place in the chronicles of the Saturdays, was very amiable and played the lute "marvellously,"¹ but she belonged to the small bourgeoisie. Mlle. Dupré, another intimate, was an intelligent and educated girl, who had made a special study of philosophy. She quoted Descartes too often to have "the air *galant*" in conversation. As much could be said of others. Mlle. de Scudéry herself, who had been received in the best company and who had formally combated the "Blue-stockingism" with admirable good sense, had not written thirty-two octavo volumes with impunity. There still remained a little ink on the end of her fingers. It seemed as if all the pedants of France held their classes in her house. Plays upon words filled the papers scattered about, upon which "Prosecutions" were held. The "Illustrious Sapho" had truly inspired Molière when he wrote *Les Précieuses Ridicules*; in vain, M. Cousin refuses to believe it.² I do not myself think that she escaped.

¹ *Le Grand Cyrus*. The greater part of the friends of Mlle. de Scudéry are given assumed names. Mlle. Bocquet is called Agélaste.

² Cf. *La Société française au XVII^e. siècle*, vol. ii., ch. xv.

Mademoiselle rendered to the wits of the day the service of sending them back to the Court for lessons in language and manners. We are well informed of this, thanks to the fantasy of a Princess which produced a little literature upon the model offered by the Luxembourg.

In 1657, Mademoiselle, being at Champigny for the Richelieu lawsuit, the Princess of Tarente¹ and Mlle. de la Trémouille² showed her their literary portraits written by themselves.³ These were imitations of those which Mlle. de Scudéry, creator of the kind, gave in her romances,—the personalities to be divined with a key. “I had never before seen anything of the kind; I found them very *galants*, and wrote my own.” After her own, she made others, and exacted them from those about her.

From this resulted a repertoire unique of its kind, in which noble personages, of both sexes and all ages, have been so obliging as not to leave us ignorant of themselves, from the state of their teeth to their opinions upon love, nor have they omitted to present similar details concerning their friends.

The collection of these *Portraits*⁴ reveals to us how the aristocracy then viewed itself, or, at least, how it wished to be estimated by others. The ordinary beginning was to picture the face and bearing.

¹ This is the friend of Mme. de Sévigné.

² Sister-in-law of the preceding. She married, in 1662, Bernard, Duke of Saxe-Jena..

³ Mademoiselle says in her *Mémoires* that they “*had* them written. This is an error.

⁴ *La Galerie des Portraits*.

The fashion was to do this with sincerity, which by no means indicates modesty. The famous Duchesse de Châtillon warned readers that she was going to speak with a naïveté "the greatest possible."

This is why [continues she] I can say that I have the most beautiful and best formed figure which has ever been seen. There is none so regular, so free, so easy. My bearing is entirely agreeable, and in all my actions I have an air infinitely *spirituel*. My face is a most perfect oval, according to all standards; my forehead is slightly elevated, which aids the regularity of the oval. My eyes are brown, very brilliant, and very deeply set; the gaze is very gentle and, at the same time, full of fire and spirit. I have a well-made nose, and as for the mouth, it is not only fine and well coloured, but infinitely agreeable, made so by a thousand little natural expressions not to be seen in any other mouths. My teeth are very beautiful and regular. I have a very small chin. I have not a very white skin. My hair is a clear chestnut, and very lustrous. My neck is more beautiful than ugly. As for my arms and hands, I am not proud of them; but the skin is very soft and smooth. It would be impossible to find a thigh better made than mine or a foot better turned.

The description of the physique was a rule of the Portraits, not even the *religieuses* believing that it should be dispensed with.

Among the Portraits is found one of an Abbess who visited Mademoiselle, the inspiring Marie-Éléonore de Rohan, a person much esteemed on account of her mother, the famous Duchesse de Montbazou, but very disconcerting, notwithstanding, for our modern ideals of monastic life.

She divided herself between the cloister and the

world, sufficiently edifying when it was needful, lively and brilliant the remainder of the time, and as natural in the one rôle as in the other. The Abbess composed works of piety for her nuns,—among others *La Morale de Salomon*, many times re-edited, and the *Paraphrases des sept Psaumes de la Pénitence*. The lady of society placed herself before her mirror and wrote without a shade of embarrassment : “ I have some haughtiness in my physiognomy and some modesty. I have too large a nose, a mouth not disagreeable, lips suitable, and teeth neither beautiful nor ugly.” This “ nose too large ” shocked the savant Huet. In reproducing the portrait of Mme. l’Abbesse, he wrote : “ As the beauty of the nose is one to which I am very sensitive, permit, Madame, that I should begin with yours. It is large ; it is white, slightly aquiline, and gives something *spirituel* to your smile.”

Another phrase of Huet’s gives us a vision of how these pseudo-religieuses, whose species was destined to disappear with the reform of convents, a not regrettable fact, accommodated the convent garb with coquetry : “ One cannot imagine,” pursued the future bishop, “ more beautiful hair than yours ; it is ash colour, blond, curls in a very agreeable manner, and admirably suits your face, as far as I have been able to judge, when it has escaped by chance, in spite of your care to conceal it.”

After the body comes the temper, tastes, qualities, and defects of the mind. Here lies the lasting interest of the Portraits. It is valuable to know

from first hand, through its own confidences, that this aristocratic society, from which the King exacted the complete sacrifice of its independence, hated nothing more than restraint, and did not hesitate to say so. Men and women, speaking for themselves, return constantly to this point, and always in the same terms: "I hate restraint. Restraint is insupportable to me." "I have an aversion for all that is called restraint." "I suffer oppression impatiently and I passionately love liberty."

From the point of view of absolute monarchy and the discipline which it wished to impose upon the Court, the French nobility had very bad habits. This nobility professed love of the chivalric virtues, and hatred of anything resembling baseness or disloyalty. In this, it was sincere, only we must admit that opinions are constantly changing even in relation to morals, and that to-day, we might have difficulty in agreeing with a gentleman of 1660 as to what is loyal or base and what is not. Honour commanded the gentleman to avenge offences against himself without too closely examining into the methods of so doing. Custom authorised him to be unjust and to act with bad faith towards the lowly, common, and feeble, in particular when money was owed. Honesty was a bourgeois virtue. Mademoiselle considered it unworthy that people of quality should abuse their authority to "ruin miserable creditors," but she was an exception.)

The obligations of "honour" were extending to all conditions. Vatel was praised for having killed

himself because the fish did not rise. "It was said," wrote Mme. de Sévigné, "that this sort of honour was a strength."

It was not the same with another sentiment which filled the plays of Corneille and which is constantly referred to in all the writings of the time. General consent reserved for people of quality the privilege of having ideas of "Glory and of the 'Beautiful' or the True," which led, according to Huet's definition, to the desire for grand things. The desire for "true glory," which is carefully distinguished from what he called the "halo of glory," was the aristocratic sentiment "par excellence." Even among the authors of the *Portraits*, every one was not considered to possess the high capacity for strongly feeling this longing.

In spite of the prevailing licentiousness of the Court, there still remained in this brilliant society many pure women. At the same time, virtue was not particularly honoured. It was a matter of personal taste, the nobility only attaching a secondary and conventional importance to its practice. The women "pure," or those who were supposed so to be, received praise from friendly pens. The others were not looked at askance, except by the Jansenists and other sombre spirits.

The young Comtesse de Fiesque, with whom Mademoiselle had been embroiled at Saint-Fargeau, had a well-established reputation for gallantry. The anonymous author of her Portrait makes allusion to this, and hastens to add, "Truly

this does her no harm." No harm at all! Made-moiselle did not think of it when Mme. de Fiesque came to demand pardon for her impertinences: "She threw herself on her knees before me; I raised her up and embraced her; she wept with joy. She is a worthy woman, only too easily led away, but good at heart."

Naturally men spoke very freely of women; it was like the crowing of cocks. An anonymous writer, who might have been the poet Racan,¹ represents himself as "very ugly, very stammering, and very disagreeable, very grumbling besides and untruthful," and goes on, "I am very bold with women and quite as successful as if I were good-looking and possessed the most agreeable qualities in the world to make myself well received. I have indeed found myself sometimes as you see me . . ." There is still greater contempt expressed for women in the following passage from the Portrait of La Rochefoucauld by himself: "Formerly I was a little *galant*; now not at all, although still youthful. I have renounced all flirtations. I am only astonished that there should still be so many worthy people who occupy themselves in culling these 'little flowers.'" Considering Mme. de Longueville, this statement is rather hard. I would remark in passing, that La Rochefoucauld was forty-five² at the moment in which he found

¹ M. de Barthélemy, editor of the *Galerie des Portraits*, called Honorat de Bueil, marquis de Racan; born in 1589, died in 1670.

² Or forty-six, depending upon the date of the Portrait, 1658 or 1659.



FRANÇOIS DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD

From the engraving by Hopwood after the painting by Petitot

himself somewhat "young to renounce flirtations." Molière, however, was soon to make all Paris laugh at the expense of Arnolphe,¹ who indulged in love affairs at the age of forty-two. Shall we conclude that Molière attempted to lessen the limit of the age of love, or was it only in the theatre that fashion exacted young lovers? I leave this question to the clever. It is not without importance in the history of sentiments.

The fashion of Portraits lasted but little more than two years with those who were its sponsors; as soon as the custom reached the bourgeoisie, the people of quality abandoned it. The very lively taste developed in the middle class, in their turn, for this diversion proved of real service to literature. The imitators of the "Galerie" learned, as previously the creators of the game had done, to know the "interior of people."² "The anatomies" of their own hearts, imperfect as they were, habituated them to discern the "qualities and temper of people,"³ and thus a large public was prepared to comprehend the women of Racine.

Mademoiselle was one of the first to profit by the "soul studies" which she had brought into favour. There remains a little passage in a portion of her *Mémoires*, written after 1660, which clearly indicates this. Progress is equally marked in a

¹ *L'École des Femmes* was issued in 1662.

² The expression is from the beautiful Marquise de Mauny, who formed part of the little Court of Saint-Fargeau.

³ From Mme. de Saintcôt, wife of the master of ceremonies and introducer of ambassadors under Louis XIV. She was a friend of Voiture.

little romance with a key, entitled *Histoire de la Princesse de Paphlagonie*, which was composed and printed at Bordeaux in 1659, during the prolonged sojourn of the Court at that place.

This is not the only imaginative work for which this facile pen¹ is responsible, but it is the only one worthy of notice. The subject is without interest; Mademoiselle has incorporated in a literary tale the absurd quarrels of her household: "I made a little history which was finished in three days, by writing in the evening after returning from the Queen." In compensation, there are in the *Princesse de Paphlagonie* some sketches after nature, written with a firm and live touch, a novelty with Mademoiselle. A passage upon the blue room of Mme. de Rambouillet will prove a great aid in any attempt to reconstruct an elegant interior under Louis XIV., if the experiment should ever be made as has been suggested of playing the comedies of Molière in the true "chamber" of Philaminte or of Célimène. Others have spoken of the rooms in which Mme. de Rambouillet received. The harmonious decoration and the scholarly disorder have been before described, yet no one but Mademoiselle has given us the intimate atmosphere of the sanctuary, with its measured and discreet light, its luxury of flowers, its objects of art, and its small but choice library betraying the tastes and the preferences of

¹ The others are, *Vie de Madame de Fouquerolles*, supposed autobiography of a lady mixed up with Fronde intrigues (MS. exists in the library of the Arsenal), and *La Relation de l'Île imaginaire* (1658), badinage upon an episode in *Don Quixote*.

the divinity of the place. The description resembles more nearly the salon of an intelligent woman of the twentieth century than a suite of the Château of Versailles.

The guests of Mademoiselle profited also by the refinement of her tastes. She enforced one single rule in her salon: cards were banished. No one was exposed to the danger of being ruined, as was the case in the circle of the King, who encouraged heavy play. It did not displease Louis XIV. to be the Providence of the losers, this again being a method of keeping his nobles in hand. His cousin in no way shared in such considerations. She said: "I hate to play cards," and only played when it was impossible to avoid doing so. She did not at all like to lose. It was remarked that the Luxembourg had gained in gaiety with the exclusion of gambling games. "There is a hundred times as much laughter," relates the Abbé de Choisy,¹ at this date very young and a frequent guest at the palace of the Luxembourg, where he met numerous companions of his own age.

The three daughters of the old Madame, Mlles. d'Orléans, d'Alençon, and de Valois,² were always with their step-sister. They escaped from their deserted apartment to run towards the noise and movement; their life was too sad with Madame and

¹ *Mémoires*. François-Timoléon de Choisy was born in 1644. There is some question as to who was his mother.

² Marguerite Louise d'Orléans was born July 28, 1645; Elisabeth, called Mlle d'Alençon, December 26, 1646; Françoise-Madeleine, called Mlle. de Valois, October 13, 1648.

her eternal "vapours." Relegated to their chambers as at Blois, with some childish companions, among whom was Louise de La Vallière,¹ still unknown, they lived in a state of distrust of their almost invisible mother, who never addressed a word to them except in scolding.

At least, with Mademoiselle one had the right to move. Young people had great freedom. Little games were organised. Parties of hide and seek and blind-man's-buff were enjoyed. "As I had violin players, it was easy to dance in any room sufficiently distant from Madame." The Abbé de Choisy adds a gracious detail: "There were violinists, but ordinarily they were silent and we danced to singing. It is so charming to dance to the sound of the voice." While the young moved gaily about, their elders had also their little games.

Everything yielded, however, to the unequalled pleasure of conversation. Among those who gave éclat to the Luxembourg, the names of La Rochefoucauld, Segrain, Mme. de Lafayette, and Mme. de Sévigné may be mentioned. Mademoiselle herself often led the conversation, beating the drums a little, her fashion in everything, but also with a certain spontaneity which she always displayed.

Conversation was, during more than a century,

¹ Born at Tours in 1644. Her father, Laurent de La Baume Le Blanc, Seigneur de La Vallière, dying in 1654, her mother remarried Jacques de Courtavel, marquis de Saint-Remi, maître d'hôtel de Gaston d'Orléans.

even to the time of the Revolution, to be the great delight of intelligent France, and this pleasure rendered incomparable service to the French language, which had rather deteriorated during the first periods of the seventeenth century. It was immediately perceived that the worst fault for a talker was to speak like a book, and the French owe to this simple observation the lesson which taught them to become the first in the world for vivacity and naturalness in the art of conversation. The habitués of the Luxembourg only regretted that the conversation did not oftener turn upon love. But, in this respect, Mademoiselle was not as complaisant as at Saint-Fargeau. We have seen that, in practice, she closed her eyes; this simplified life. For her own pleasure, she preferred other topics; this particular one became at length insupportable to her. "I am much criticised," says she in her *Portrait*, "because the verses I like the least, are those which are passionate, for I have not a tender soul." Besides, she had really nothing more to say upon the subject of love. She had just made her profession of faith in a correspondence with Mme. de Motteville, who, while awaiting something better, circulated a manuscript in which one reads, "Its conditions are shameful; it is robbery and unjust, without faith and without equity. It is an impiety; it mocks the holy sacrament. Marriage adjusts nothing: everything is given to man."

"Let us escape from slavery," cried Mademoiselle. "Let there be at least one corner of the

globe in which one can say that women are their own mistresses." Every one has the right to despise love and marriage, provided only that one does not insist on applying this sentiment only to others. The youth of the Luxembourg knew too well that Mademoiselle sought with an increasing ardour that "slavery" against which in conversation or in writing she called her sex to revolt. Her intimate friends realised that she was inventing illusions, under the influence of a possible possession which induced a belief in their reality. She had believed in an eager tenderness on the part of the little Monsieur who had married some one else. After the restoration of the Stuarts (April, 1660), she imagined (the recital is fully given in her *Mémoires*) that the King, Charles II., whom she had refused with disdain when he was only a poor pretender, had no other intention in remounting the throne than again to demand her hand, and that she would nobly respond: "I do not deserve this, having rejected your suit when you were in disgrace. The remembrance of this would always rest on our two hearts and would prevent true happiness." This fine response has been quoted a hundred times. Unfortunately, it is very clearly proved through the testimony of English documents¹ that Mademoiselle had no occasion to make it.

Advances, alas! had come from one side only and had been ill received. "I very much desire

¹ Cf. *Madame, Memoirs of Henrietta, Duchess of Orléans*, by Julia Cartwright (London, 1894).

the marriage of Mademoiselle," wrote Lady Derby¹ to her sister-in-law, Mme. de la Trémouille, through whom passed the "insinuations," "but the King has a great aversion to it on account of the contempt which she has shown him. I have spoken of her to Marquis d'Ormond, but I have met with little encouragement." In another letter: "I have proposed Mademoiselle, but I have little hope. If the King looks for wealth, we can hardly expect greater than with Mademoiselle. But I fear that having been despised in his poverty, he may be little disposed to regard such a marriage." Charles II. would listen to nothing; he had guarded a grudge against his cousin. On the other hand, there is every appearance of truth when she states that the old Duc Charles III. de Lorraine,² had demanded her "on his knees" for a youth of eighteen, Prince Charles de Lorraine, his nephew, who became afterwards one of the most famous Austrian generals. It was a question, as can well be understood, of a political combination.

Unfortunately, Prince Charles himself had another project, better suited to his age. He was in love with the eldest daughter of Madame, Marguerite d'Orléans, who returned his affection with all her heart. The youthful society of the Luxembourg accuses Mademoiselle of having, through jealousy, caused this project to fail. "The affair

¹ Lady Derby was a La Trémouille. The sister-in-law to whom the letters are addressed was the sister of Turenne.

² Or Charles IV.; there are two methods of counting the Dukes of Lorraine.

had been advanced," relates that gossip, the Abbé de Choisy, "but the old Mademoiselle had talked and cackled so much that she spoiled everything." She was desperate at the thought of her younger sisters, beggars compared to herself, marrying under her very eyes. Marguerite d'Orléans made, out of spite, a marriage which turned out badly,¹ but through which Mademoiselle in no way profited. Owing to a singular change of desire, from the day on which it had depended upon herself to marry Prince Charles, she had only felt contempt for this little prince "*sans forts*."²

These caprices made the King impatient, who ended by making negotiations with Lorraine without any longer occupying himself with his cousin. Louis XIV. still retained the old monarchical principles in relation to the marriage of princesses. He regarded them simply from the point of view of politics; questions to be settled by governments and into which sentiments must not be permitted to intrude. The idea that every human being has a right to happiness did not belong to his times, and if it had been suggested, the King would have surely condemned it, for it insisted upon individual interests as opposed to those of the community, the rights of which appeared specially sacred to the people of the seventeenth century.

Louis XIV. did not believe for himself that he

¹ See the very curious volume by M. Rodocanachi, *Les Infortunes d'une petite-fille d'Henri IV.* The marriage of the Princess Marguerite with the Duke of Tuscany took place April 19, 1661.

² *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle.

had the right to accept only the agreeable duties belonging to his "trade of king," since he had undertaken an existence devoted to strenuous labour, when it would have been so pleasant to do nothing. According to his principle, the higher the position of an individual, the more it was fitting that he should sacrifice his own desires to the public good. Mademoiselle had the honour of being his first cousin ; he had firmly resolved to marry her, or not to marry her, to bestow her hand upon a hero or a monster, according as he should judge it useful to "the service of the King." There was a certain grandeur in this fashion of recognising relationship.

It had not occurred to the King that Mademoiselle would ever have the audacity to resist him. It can be said that any real understanding between the two was an impossibility. Mademoiselle had lived too long in the midst of the opposition to yield to the notion of absolute royal power without limitations and including all possible persons. Louis XIV. had a too profound faith in the doctrine of the divine right of kings to refuse for himself any of the prerogatives devolving upon him. Both these opinions represented Frenchmen at large ; but for the moment Mademoiselle was being borne along by the ebbing tide, Louis XIV. by the rising one.

This Prince had entered the world at an opportune moment to profit by a doctrine which, according to a happy expression, seemed made for him as he for it. After the Reform, the enforcing the old

theory of the divine origin of power had a beneficial result. The populace in many a country and province had found themselves as much interested as the sovereigns in suppressing the political power of the Pope outside of his own States, and resenting his interference in the affairs of other countries.

In France, in the sixteenth century, one meets with Calvinist theologians amongst the writers who claimed that princes received their power directly from God, and from God alone. The immediate consequence of this doctrine was to heighten the éclat of royalty. Princes became images of divinity, and even something more; Louis XIV., not yet five, heard himself spoken of as the "Divinity made visible." Two years later, the Royal Catechism¹ explained to him that he was "Vice-Dieu." Twenty years later Louis XIV. was "Dieu," without any qualification, and Bossuet himself declared it from the pulpit. On April 2, 1662, preaching at the Louvre and speaking of the duties of kings, Bossuet cried: "O Gods of nations and of lands, you must die like mortals; nevertheless, until Death, you are Gods."

When a man hears such statements without shrinking, he is quite ready to accept all the consequences. "Kings," writes an anonymous person, "are absolute lords of all who breathe in any portion of their empire."²

Louis XIV. has very clearly formulated the

¹ Par Fortin de la Hoguete (1645).

² *L'Image du Souverain* (1649).

same thought in his *Mémoires*: "The one who has given kings to men has wished that they should be respected as his lieutenants, reserving for himself alone the right to examine their conduct. It is the divine wish that any one born a subject should obey without question."¹ It must be added that Louis had arrived at these conclusions under a pressure of public opinion, which had become impatiently desirous of giving to monarchy the strength needed to place the shattered land again in a condition of order.

On the death of Mazarin, France resembled a large establishment whose cupboards, confided to a negligent steward, had not during an entire generation been put in order. A flash of vivid hope passed through France on seeing its young monarch, vigorously aided by Colbert, put the broom to the mass of abuses and inequities which bore the name of administration, and show himself resolved, in spite of resistance, to introduce into the great public services order and moral cleanliness.

This was not finished without tears and grinding of teeth, not without some injustice also, as in the case of Fouquet, assuredly culpable, but paying for many others, of whom Mazarin was the first. But this cleansing *was* accomplished. First, the finances were attacked, with the happy result that people paid less and that the imposts returned more; then justice,—law reform was commenced in 1665, and the "grands jours" of Auvergne were opened the

¹ *Mémoires pour 1667*. Ed. by Charles Dreyss.

same year ; the army,—the soldiers, paid regularly, committed fewer disorders, and the nobility learned, willingly or not, military obedience.

At the same time, industry and commerce increased to such an extent that, from 1668, orders flooded Paris “from the entire world” for a vast number of articles which ten years previous had been imported. The ambassador from Venice, Giustiniani, writes this statement to his government.

The strong will of the master had put the country in motion. Louis XIV. was confirmed in his high opinion of absolute monarchy. The same year in which Bossuet had encouraged him to believe himself above ordinary humanity, the King decided, with a perfectly equable conscience, to marry the Grande Mademoiselle to a veritable monster, in the interest of a political combination which he held at heart, for he returns to it several times in his *Mémoires*. His father-in-law, Philippe IV., menaced the independence of Portugal.¹ Louis XIV. hesitated to assist Portugal openly, on account of the treaty of the Pyrénées.² On the other hand, he considered double-dealing more honest to the Spaniards than their conduct might be to him if opportunity permitted. “I cannot doubt that they would have been the first to violate the treaty of the Pyrénées on a thousand points, and I should believe myself failing in my duty to the State, if, through being more scrupulous, I should permit

¹ Portugal had again become independent in 1640.

² *Mémoires* for the year 1661.

them freely to ruin Portugal, and to fall back upon me with their entire strength."

It seemed to him that he could conciliate all by aiding Portugal secretly, and Turenne had no repugnance to this course. This kind of action was then called, and is often still designated, sagacious statesmanship.

Such being the situation, Turenne came one afternoon to seek Mademoiselle in her cabinet. The account of this interview has been preserved for us by the Princess, and we can this time trust her accuracy. Her *Mémoires* are in accord with contemporary witnesses. It was towards the end of the winter of 1662. Turenne seated himself at the corner of the fireplace and began with tender protestations. "As I am somewhat brusque, I at once demanded of him, 'What is the question?' He replied: 'I wish to marry you.' I interrupted him, saying: 'That is not easy; I am content with my condition.'

" 'I will make you Queen. Listen to me. Let me tell you everything, and afterward you can speak. I wish to make you Queen of Portugal.' 'Fi!' cried I to myself, 'I do not wish it.' He went on: 'Maidens of your quality have no desires; they must act as the King wills.' "

The monarch whose mention makes Mademoiselle cry "Fi!" was called Alphonse VI., and was not yet twenty. At twenty-three, the Abbé de Saint-Romain,¹ our envoy to Portugal, reported that he

¹ Mignet, *Négociations relatives à la succession d'Espagne*.

could neither read nor write. In compensation, he pulled the ears and tore out the hair of those who approached him, and this was in his "good days"; in the bad ones, he struck, indifferently with his feet, hands, or sword, any one who vexed him. His subjects no longer dared to pass through the streets at night, because one of his diversions was to charge at them suddenly in the "darkness and to try to spit them."

In person, Alphonse VI. was a fat little barrel, paralysed in one limb, "gluttonous and dirty," almost always drunk, and vomiting after his meals. He wore six or seven coats one over the other, amongst which "a petticoat of three hundred tafetas, embroidered with pistol shots"; upon his head, a hood falling over his eyes, several caps over this, one of which covered the ears, and an "English bonnet" over all. "His body," pursues the Abbé, "smells horribly, and he has always bad ulcers in the softer portions . . . and these offences could not be supported if he did not bathe once daily in winter, twice in other seasons." Fear obliged him to make "seventeen people always sleep in his chamber."

Turenne, however, forced himself to gild this rather bitter pill. He pointed out to Mademoiselle how useful it would be and for what reasons to have a French princess on the throne of Portugal. He promised her, knowing her special weakness, that she should be absolute mistress of the "great and powerful army"; that the King would give it

entirely over to her by degrees. Without doubt, Alphonse VI. was a paralytic, "but," asserted Turenne, "this does not appear when he is dressed ; he only slightly drags one leg, and is a little awkward with his arm. So much the better, if his intelligence also is a little slow. It is not known whether or not he has any wit ; after all, it is only good form for husbands to be gay."

"But," replied Mademoiselle, "to be the link of a perpetual war between France and Spain seems to me a very undesirable position." The situation would be still worse if, as she was convinced would be the case, the two crowns should arrive at an accommodation.

"A truly beautiful future : to have a drunken and paralytic husband, whom the Spaniards would chase from his kingdom, and to return to France to demand alms, when all my wealth has been dissipated, and to remain only the queen of some little village. It is good to be Mademoiselle in France with five hundred thousand francs of income, and nothing to demand of the Court. Thus placed, it is foolish to move. If the Court becomes weariness, one can retire to one's château in the country, in which a little private court of one's own can be held. It is very diverting also to build new houses. Finally, as mistress of one's own wishes one is happy, for one does what one wills."

"But," returned Turenne, "remaining Mademoiselle, even admitting all that you have said, you are still subject to the King. He commands what

he wills ; when his wishes are refused, he scolds ; a thousand disagreeable things are felt at Court ; often the King goes farther, he chases people away. When they are content in one place, he sends them to another. He orders journeys from one end of the kingdom to the other. Sometimes, he imprisons recalcitrants in their own homes, or sends them into convents, and in the end, obedience must come. What can you reply to this ?”

“That people of your station do not menace those of mine,” cried Mademoiselle in anger ; “that I know what I must do ; that if the King says anything contrary, I will see what I shall respond to him.”

She forbade Turenne to mention this affair again, and withdrew. “Five or six days later, he again addressed me.” At this time, some common friends were present. Mademoiselle grew anxious. How far was Turenne the authorised messenger of the King ? She wrote to the latter to provoke an explanation. No response. She confided her trouble to the Queen Mother, who confined herself to these words : “If the King wishes this, it is a terrible pity ; he is master ; as for me, I have nothing to say in the matter.”

“I was in frightful haste,” adds Mademoiselle, “that the time for the Baths of Forges should come, and that I might go away.” The season arrived. It was needful to take leave of the King. She wished to have the Court plainly understand her intention : “‘Sire, if your Majesty is thinking of my

establishment, here is M. de Beziérs, who will go to Turin; he can negotiate my marriage with M. de Savoie.'—'I will think of you when it suits me, and marry you when it will be of service to me,' in a dry tone which much frightened me. After this, he saluted me very coldly, and I went away and I took my waters."

Mademoiselle had the imprudence both to talk and write. Bussy-Rabutin even pretends that "she had written a letter to the King of Spain, which was intercepted," suggesting a fête in his neighbourhood; but this is difficult to believe, however inconsiderate Mademoiselle sometimes was.

From Forges, Mademoiselle went to the Château d'Eu, which she had bought a short time before. It was at this place, October 15, 1662, that she received from the King commands to return to Saint-Fargeau, "until new orders." Upon the route she met letters from every one.

To be banished for having refused to marry Alphonse VI.,—the country was not yet ready for these consequences of the new régime. It was soon known that Mademoiselle had ordered from Paris "needles, canvas, and silk," as if she expected to have on her hands plenty of spare time. But if affairs remained at this point, she was not paying too dearly for the pleasure of escaping being made Queen of Portugal. This was her own opinion, and she became very amiable.

The departure of Mademoiselle did not leave a

large vacuum in the young Court; there was at the official ceremonies one princess the less, and this was all. For the new generation had passed with the King to the front ranks; the Grande Mademoiselle was now only the "old Mademoiselle," as Abbé de Choisy called her. The youthful loves and the pleasures belonging to twenty years had nothing to do with her, nor, what is more, with the Queen Mother, who had in old age become a preacher, and who now belonged to the "dévots" grouped under her protection.

Molière by his impiety scandalised these pious people who considered it wicked for the King to have mistresses.

The question still waiting to be solved was, on which side the master would definitely range himself. For the moment, Louis XIV. leaned very strongly towards the friends of good-nature and of his joyous freedom. Would he be gained over by these? Would the logic of events and ideas lead him to shake off the trammel of religious practices, then that of belief, in the fashion of Hugues de Lionne, of the Bussy-Rabutins, of the Guiche, of the Roquelaure, of the Vardes, and a hundred other "Libertins," who only saw in the practices of religion a collection of silly tricks? The obtaining an answer to this query was really the important affair of the year 1662, a much more serious interest than any preoccupation in regard to the chronicle of the doings at the Luxembourg or at Saint-Fargeau.

The young Queen was anxious; she scented danger, but she knew only how to groan and weep, without comprehending that red eyes and a grumbling tone were not the best attractions for retaining a husband. She had not even the consolation of being pitied, having only made the one friend, Anne of Austria, who in default of something better, forced herself to preserve some illusions upon the melancholy of the little Queen's destiny.

It would have been hard to find a better creature than Marie-Thérèse, fresh and round, who leapt with joy the day following her marriage, and related ingenuously to Mme. de Motteville her little romance. Marie-Thérèse had always remembered that her mother,¹ who died when she was only six, had repeated that she desired to see her Queen of France; that this was the only possible happiness, or, if not attained, nothing remained but a convent. The little Princess had grown up with the thought of France. Louis XIV. had been the *Prince Charmant* of her infant dreams. When she knew that a French lord came "post haste" to demand her hand for his master, it seemed to her entirely natural. She had spied from a window the arrival of M. de Gramont.² He had passed by very

¹ Élisabeth de France, daughter of Henry IV., born in 1602. She married Philip IV., in 1615, gave birth to Marie-Thérèse in 1638, and died in 1644.

² This was the Marshal de Gramont, father of the Comte de Guiche. The "magnificence" and the "*galanterie*" of his journey to Madrid to demand the Infanta have left lively memories.

quickly, followed by many other Frenchmen, decorated with gold and silver, and covered with feathers and ribbons of all colours. One might have said, "a *parterre* of flowers, bearing the royal demand," related the young Queen, becoming poetical for the first and last time in her life.

Once married, Marie-Thérèse had demanded of her husband the promise that they should never be separated, either by day or night, if it possibly could be avoided. Louis XIV. promised and kept his word, but it was a useless precaution.

According to Mme. de Motteville and Mme. de Maintenon,¹ the Queen did not know how to conduct herself toward her husband. She was stupid in her manner of showing her devotion ; if the King wanted her, she would refuse to sacrifice a prayer in order to be with him. She had also an "ill-directed" jealousy ; if the King did not desire her company, she did not sufficiently distinguish, in her complaints, against those who wiled him away, between Mlle. de La Vallière and the Council of Ministers. Her ill temper was discouraging. If the King led her with him, she complained of everything ; if he did not, there were floods of tears. If the dinner was not to her taste she sulked ; if it pleased her, tormented herself : "Everything will be eaten, nothing will be left for me." "And the King jeered at her," added Mademoiselle, hav-

¹ *Souvenirs de Madame de Caylus, Mémoires de Mme. de Motteville, Souvenirs sur Madame de Maintenon*, published by the Comte de Haussonville and M. G. Hanotaux.



HELÈNE LAMBERT, MADAME DE MOTTEVILLE

After the painting by De Largillière

ing the honour, through her birth, of being often found amongst those who "eat everything."

Marie-Thérèse was good, generous, virtue itself, she had a violent passion for her husband, and with all this she was a person to be avoided. Mme. de Maintenon summed up the situation in saying that "the Queen knew how to love but not how to please ; the reverse of the King, who possessed qualities for pleasing all, without being capable of a strong affection. All women except his own wife were agreeable to him."

Free-thinkers and debauchees did not have to consider Marie-Thérèse ; she had not a shadow of influence over her husband. For different reasons, neither Monsieur, the brother of the King, nor the wife of Monsieur were any obstacles. Much has been said of the seductive power of Mme. Henrietta of England¹; of her irresistible grace, her delicate beauty, and her special charm. These characteristics, very rare with a great princess, had proved of great value during her youth of humiliating poverty, when she was reduced to living as a "private person." She had then met with "all celebrities, all civility, and all humanity, even upon ordinary conditions,"² and nothing perhaps had contributed more to make her love men and adore women." Her faults were great, but they were not weighed against her, on account of that gift of

¹ Married on April 1, 1661, at seventeen. Monsieur (Philippe de France, duc d'Orléans) was then twenty-one.

² *Histoire de Madame Henriette d'Angleterre*, by Mme. de La Fayette.

pleasing which was in her and which circumstances had developed. Madame was a hidden evil influence, and an openly dangerous one. She could become the centre of low Court intrigues, without losing, or even risking, the loss of her empire over hearts. To this first good fortune was united that of having Bossuet to shelter her memory.

Henrietta of England has traversed "centuries protected by his [Bossuet's] funeral oration," as she passed through her life protected by the fascination with which nature endows certain women, by no means always the best ones.

Monsieur since our last encounter with him had not improved. He had, as might be said, publicly and without shame, established himself in vice, and in vice of the worst kind. Marriage had done nothing for him. "The miracle of inflaming the heart of this prince," discreetly explains Mme. de La Fayette, "was reserved for no woman belonging to the social world."¹ Delivered over to a crowd of very exacting favourites who never left him a moment free from domestic complications, Monsieur had, according to the expressive word of his mother, become indisputably an intriguer. Between Madame and himself, their court was a place of inconceivable agitation, a sink of lies and calumnies, of small perfidies, and little treasons, which make one sick, even when related by Mme. de La Fayette.

Truly, I hardly know whether or not in writing her *Histoire de Madame Henriette* this latter has

¹ *Histoire de Madame de Henriette*, etc.

rendered a service to her dear Princess. With the exception of the first pages, before the marriage, and of the beautiful death scene at the end, the rest is a tissue of nothings so contemptible in every respect that the book falls from one's hands : and this is all that the author of the *Princesse de Clèves* has found to say about a person so prominent ; of a sister-in-law to whom Louis XIV. confided political secrets and whom he loved almost *too* dearly.

Among all the personages belonging to the royal family, the Libertins had only to consider the Queen Mother, their declared enemy, and the King himself, as yet too reserved for it to be divined how he contemplated accommodating pleasure and religion. It had not taken long to perceive that he would not restrain himself in pleasure. He was married, June 9, 1660. A year later commenced the series of mistresses imposed upon the royal household and upon France, they and their children, in a fashion which recalls Oriental polygamy rather than the manners of the Occident. Louis XIV. had felt himself incapable of a virtuous life. One day, when his mother, profiting by the tenderness awakened by a reconciliation — they had not spoken for some time to each other — represented the scandal of his liaison with Mlle. de La Vallière, he responded cordially with tears of grief which proceeded from the bottom of his heart, where were still some remains of his former piety,—“that he knew his wrong ; that he felt sometimes the pain and shame of it ; that he had tried his best

not to offend God and not to yield to his passions, but he was forced to confess that they were stronger than his reason, that he could not resist their violence, and that he no longer felt any desire so to do."¹

This conversation took place in July, 1664. The following autumn, the King having found the Queen, his wife, in tears in her oratoire on account of a too-well founded jealousy, he gave her the hope of finding him at thirty "a good husband,"—a somewhat cynical suggestion.

He not only had "violent passions," but he had not discovered any reasons for restraining himself in regard to women. One reads in his *Mémoires*, which were written for the dauphin to see, a passage worthy of Lord Chesterfield, in which he gives his son his ideas upon the subject of kings' mistresses.

The page referred to relates to the year 1667, in which commenced the war of the *Dévolution*:²

Before departing for the army, I sent an edict to Parliament. I raised to a Duchy the territory of Vaujours in favour of Mlle. de La Vallière and recognised a daughter of mine by her. For, resolving in accompanying the army not to remain apart from possible perils, I thought it just to assure to the child the honour of her birth, and to give to her mother an establishment suitable to the affection which since her sixth year I had felt for her. I might have done well not to mention this attachment, the example of which is not good to follow; but having drawn much instruction from the failings

¹ *Mémoires de Mme. de Motteville.*

² War between relations in regard to property.



LOUISE DE LA VALLIÈRE

From the engraving by Flameng after the painting by Petitot

of others, I have not wished to deprive you of the lessons you may learn from mine.

The first instruction to draw from his failings was that it was not needful to waste time on women; "that the time devoted to love should never be taken to the prejudice of other duties." The second consideration was that in abandoning the heart it was necessary to remain absolute master of one's mind: that the tenderness of a lover should be separated from the resolutions of a sovereign; that the fair one who gives pleasure should never be permitted to speak of affairs, or of those who serve us, and that the two portions of life should be kept entirely apart. "You will remember how I have warned you on various occasions of the harmful influence of favourites; that of a mistress is still more dangerous."

Louis XIV. insisted at length upon the mental weakness which makes women dangerous. He had studied them from an intimate point of view, and he judged "these animals" almost as did Arnolphe. "They are," said he to the Dauphin, "eloquent in their expressions, pressing in their prayers, obstinate in their sentiments. No secret can be safe with them. They always act with calculation, and consequently use 'cunning and artifice.' However much it may cost to a loving heart, a Prince cannot take too many 'precautions' with his mistresses. This is a duty imposed upon him by the throne itself."

Poor La Vallière, so disinterested, so little of an

intriguer ! What grief if she had read these cruel pages !

The counsels we have just read are very politic, very prudent ; they have nothing to do with either morality or religion. The royal *Mémoires*, in another part indeed, add that "the Prince should always be a perfect model of virtue," and also that it is a Christian duty to abstain from all illicit commerce, "which is *almost never innocent*."

As a matter of fact, Louis XIV. had not extracted much in regard to moral discipline from a cult of which he knew only the forms. During his infancy, his mother had reserved to herself his religious education. She had led him at an early age into the churches, where she passed a portion of each day, and she had communicated to him a little of her narrow and mechanical piety. Louis XIV. never understood any other kind. He knew his catechism but little better than his Latin grammar. This ignorance was, perhaps, aggravated by the fact of his realising the need of a knowledge of Latin in order to read diplomatic despatches, while he could see no use whatever in knowing the facts of religion.

He never changed in this respect ; Mme. de Maintenon herself made vain efforts. The second Madame, La Palatine, did not succeed better. She wrote : "If he only believed that he should listen to his confessor and recite his *Pater Noster*, all would go well and his devotion would be perfect."¹

¹ Letter of July 9, 1749, and *passim*, in his correspondence.

Holding these ideas, the King was very vexed, deified as he was by a crowd of adulators, to meet among his subjects men sufficiently bold to blame his conduct and to frankly tell him so. Some prelates showed severity. It belonged to their profession to do so. But that courtiers, and even, as it was related, a simple bourgeois of Paris, should dare to address remonstrances to their sovereign,—this could not be tolerated,—especially as their reproaches excited his mother against him,—at the risk of an embroilment, which in fact occurred.

As good politics, if for no other reason, Louis XIV. was resolved not to permit any interference in his affairs. He felt somewhat vaguely that all these people were uniting to teach him a lesson. He suspected a considerable organised force behind this *Cabale des Dévots*, who represented austerity at Court, and whom the Libertins of the Louvre ridiculed.

We know this organised force. We have seen it at work in a former chapter under the name of *The Compagnie du Saint Sacrement*, when it was engaged with Vincent de Paul in the great charitable undertakings of the century.¹ The malevolent nickname of *Cabale des Dévots* had been given, towards the year 1658, by the many who abominated the society without knowing its true title or its organisation, simply because it disturbed the course of their own existence.

Since the date at which we last saw the organisa-

¹ Cf. *La Cabale des Dévots*, by M. Raoul Allier.

tion at work, the management had been offering the same mixture of good and evil.

Everything that it had done for the relief of the poor, the prisoners, the galley slaves, and other miserable beings, to protect them against abuse and tyranny, and to raise them morally, had been above all praise ; as had also its efforts to assure a certain amount of decency in the streets, or to combat in the higher classes the two curses of the time, duels and gambling. As much cannot be said of the narrow and fanatical opinions which rendered it a persecutor and police agent, of its taste for spying or accusing, of its barbarity in regard to heretics and men of genius. It easily became dangerous and malignant, and it was difficult to find defence against this occult power which had " eyes and ears everywhere." Mazarin, whom it secretly tormented through anonymous letters, had sought and pursued it with eagerness, and during the last months of his life the society was forced to hide itself. After the death of the Cardinal, the *Compagnie* again put itself in motion, and it is evident that it had regained confidence, for with only the Queen Mother for its friend it dared to attack the King.

At this epoch, Anne of Austria is a very interesting person. The *Compagnie du Saint Sacrement* had become a political party since it tried to make sure of the King, and if it had succeeded, the history of the entire reign would have been altered. Delivered to its influence, the State would not have

delayed until the Great Revolution to trouble its conscience about the duties towards the people at large.

The imprudence of the conduct of the society towards the King, and his indiscretions, gave the game to the Libertins. They did not despair, considering the discontent of the King, of attracting him to themselves, to their incredulity, their lack of docility towards religious belief, and in truth, without going to the point of regretting their final check, we can hardly be sorry that this "routine intelligence" should have received a slight shock.

The mind of Louis XIV., so remarkable for its justice and solidity, was the opposite of the modern mind in its total absence of curiosity and in the difficulty of changing its point of view. The King had need of skeptical reading. As he never read, the assaults of the Libertins rendered him the service of slightly moving his ideas; they deranged him in his habits of mechanical practices.

Olivier d'Ormesson, who was of the *Compagnie du Saint Sacrement*, wrote, after the Pentecost of 1664, "that the King had not performed his devotions at the fête, and that Monsieur having demanded if he intended to 'practice,' he had replied that he was no longer going to be a hypocrite like himself, who was confessing only to please the Queen Mother."¹

The conscience of the King was passing through a crisis; every one felt this. In the presence of an

¹ *Journal d'Olivier Lefèvre d'Ormesson.*

event of such importance, the misfortunes of the Grande Mademoiselle, already but little in the thoughts of the rising generation, completely lost interest. Everything was forgotten.

During the first months of her exile, Mademoiselle was occupied in opposing the King. Louis XIV. had not abandoned the idea of marrying her to Alphonse VI., and Turenne was endeavouring to make her "reasonable," from which resulted an "interchange of letters" and of official visits which had the good side of breaking the monotony at Saint-Fargeau. This time, the life there was very dull. The old animation had not returned. Too proud to avow it, Mademoiselle expressed herself cheerfully in her letters. On November 9, 1662, she wrote to Bussy-Rabutin: "I believe that the sojourn which I shall make here will be longer than you desire. If I were not afraid of appearing too indifferent, I should say that I care but little. Perhaps this would be true; but it is not well to always speak the truth."¹

Her *Mémoires* are more sincere. She relates that at the end of five months, she wrote to the King that she should die if she remained longer; that it was an unhealthy place on account of the marshes by which the château was surrounded; that she "did not believe herself to have done anything which merited death, and such a death, . . . and if he wished her to make a long penitence for the crimes which she had *not* committed, she sup-

¹ *Mémoires de Bussy-Rabutin.*

plicated him to permit her to go to Eu." Louis XIV. permitted Eu, but made Mademoiselle understand that he had not renounced the project of marriage with the King of Portugal, and that he hoped to lead her, through his kindness, "to the sentiments she should have." She did not delay to discuss the matter. "I departed at once and quitted Saint-Fargeau without regret." This was a final adieu.

Mademoiselle had just bought the Comté d'Eu, under circumstances which show how the landed and manorial estates of the ancient régime, which from a distance appear so solid, were in reality held by the most fragile tenure and at the mercy of any accident. The Comté d'Eu was the property of the illustrious and powerful family of Guise. In 1654, the proprietor of the moment, Louis de Lorraine, duc de Joyeuse, was killed at the siege of Arras, leaving an only son of youthful age, Louis Joseph de Lorraine, Prince de Joinville. This child had for guardian his aunt, Mlle. de Guise, an intelligent and important person, the oracle of the family, says Saint-Simon. He had also two other guardians, one of whom, Claude de Bourdeville, Comte de Montresor, had secretly married Mlle. de Guise. These three guardians soon perceived that they were powerless to defend the interests confided to them. The Comté d'Eu was burdened with two million francs of debt, a figure which would not have led to disaster if the Duc de Joyeuse had been there to make his rights respected

and to reclaim his share of the monarchical manna ; such as pensions, gratifications of the King, benefices, governments, Court charges. But he was dead, and the property of the minor had been put to the quarry, by the people of affairs on the one hand, and the Norman peasants on the other. Against these business sharks, the guardians were obliged, after years of struggle, to invoke the aid of Parliament. They addressed a petition¹ in which they stated that their ward, because he was a child "destitute of the powerful means" which his father would have possessed, had become the victim of usurers and rogues. The two million debt of the Comté d'Eu had been largely bought up by artificial and suspicious creditors, with whom it was impossible to arrive at any settlement.

These fishers in troubled waters had brought the disorder to its height in practising seizures. The entire revenue was exhausted by expenses. The guardians besought Parliament to extricate them from this slough in ordering a replevin "of all the seizures and judgments, and in according that there should be a reprieve from all prosecutions and executions against them during two years." They hoped with this respite to arrive at a general liquidation.

Against the Norman peasants no one saw anything to do but quickly to outwit them through the

¹ *À nos Seigneurs de Parlement.*—Archives of the Château of Eu. Mgr. le Duc d'Orléans has thrown open to me the Archives of Eu with a liberality for which I here heartily express my gratitude.

sale of the Comté d'Eu to a master capable of overawing them. The difficulty, under the conditions in France at that time, was to find a person of quality able to dispose of several millions.

Mademoiselle, who always had money, had at once been thought of. At first, she was too occupied in fighting her father, but the idea struck her favourably, and as soon as her hands were free she remembered the suggestion. The bargain was concluded in 1657. This affair did not suit the pettifoggers. There were so many opposing clauses, so many legal complications, so many lawsuits, and so many decrees needed in order to place Mademoiselle in power, and to make it possible for her to possess Eu in due form, that years rolled by, as the petition of the two guardians testifies, before the peasants of Eu were deranged in their work of moles. During the delay, they had continued to devour the substance of the princely orphan, aided it must be said by other Normans not peasants, who did not show themselves more scrupulous or less avaricious.

How both gentles and peasants acted can be exactly known through the Archives of Eu. At the time of the guardian petition, Mademoiselle had sent one of her men to take account of the state of affairs.

The report of the agent, completed by other business papers,¹ establishes that the Comté of Eu

¹ *Déclaration par le Menu du Comté d'Eu* (May 8, 1660), and *Inventaire général du Comté d'Eu* (July 1, 1663).

drew more than half its revenue from its forest. This forest, which still exists, contains from ten to eleven thousand acres,¹ is eight to nine leagues long, and should have been formed of trees of all ages, if the inhabitants had not worked so industriously that it was difficult to find a "piece of timber." It was, at the date of which we are speaking, only underwood, and often only scrub bushes, on account of the cattle which "damaged it." The entire neighbourhood had contributed to this extraordinary destruction of a forest of eight leagues.

The inhabitants of twenty villages, several abbeys, gentlemen, priests, simple private people had come, under pretext of "ancient rights," to take the wood as if it belonged to them. The guards of the forest and their relatives and friends had likewise helped themselves. The officials of the domain had cut, wrongly or rightly, what the public had left, and to complete the ruin of the woods, every one had sent cows or pigs to run through the young bushes.

The agent of Mademoiselle concluded that it was absolutely needful to stop this pillage, or even "fifty thousand francs' worth of wood could never be secured annually." He pointed out other abuses ; in the absence of a firm hand the nature of seignorial privilege rendered these inevitable. I have myself seen many tables of the revenues of the Comté Eu in the seventeenth century. The frauds must have been easy and tempting, the col-

¹ The Norman acre contains 81 acres and 71 *centiares*

lecting of imposts most costly. One notes a payment due at Christmas, in money and material, by inhabitants, possessors of any real estate, "house or hovel," field or garden :

"Francis Guignon of the village of Cyrel owes 40 sols 2 capons, on account of a house in the said Cyrel." "François de Buc . . . owes 8 sols a third of a capon, on account of a house." "Guillaume Fumechon . . . owes 43 sols and 2 capons on account of half an acre of land." "The heirs of Jean Dree owe 8 sols and the half of a capon." "Jean Rose 31 sols, 2 fowls and 11 eggs, on account of meadow lands." "The Sieur de Saint-Igny of Mesnil at Caux owes 4 francs 9 sols, 10 bushels of wheat and the same quantity of oats." "Alizon owes 3 sols, 6 deniers and one third of a capon." A cultivator owes "78 quarts of wheat, 15 bushels of oats and a fowl." Another "2 bushels 1 quart of oats and a quarter of a goose." Another "5 quarters of a goose,"

and so on through 350 folio pages.

The impost called "*du travers*" was enforced upon merchandise entering Eu by the gate of Picardy. So much was paid by chariot or loaded horse. Butchers paid for "every head of cattle, sow, or pig, one denier, for each white beast, an obole"; vendors of fish for each basket borne upon the arm, "2 deniers"; furriers for each skin, an obole.

Then comes the impost "upon the 'old clothes,' or 'dyed materials' for which is due for every bed sold in the city of Eu, new or old, 4 deniers; and for each robe, doublet, or pair of stockings, or any other article for the use of man or woman, when sold, 1 denier."

The linen merchant also owed one denier, upon pain of amend, for each cut sold. There was levied a tax upon the measuring of grain and the weighing of merchandise. The mills were the property of the Lord of Eu, and grinding was not permitted except for him. The agent of Mademoiselle recommended the enforcing of this, which had been neglected, with the result of diminished revenue.

The fishers of Tréport paid 500 herrings at each drawing of the nets; outsiders who came to fish in the Tréport, 100 herrings. All stray animals not reclaimed before one year belonged to the Lord of Eu, and all royal fish, like sturgeons, whales, porpoises, 8 "*oues de mer*," and other large fish.

This is not all, but it is sufficient to explain the rapidity with which the revenue of a seignorial property melted away when the master was not there to make the little world afraid, to solicit judges, in case of lawsuits, according to the usage, and to apply to the King in need, for an important person, having, according to the popular expression, "the long arm."

Both evil and possible remedy were known. The deplorable state in which affairs had been found had not at all disturbed the agent of Mademoiselle. Knowing his mistress, he did not doubt that she would get the better of the Normans, and he predicted success. "When everything is put in order," said he, "(as appears will easily be accomplished) the Comté of Eu will be a profitable estate yielding a great revenue." The use of the word

“easily” was a slight exaggeration. The Comté of Eu was finally “adjudged” to Mademoiselle de Montpensier, by “decree” of the Parliament of Paris, August 20, 1660, for the sum of 2,550,000 francs. She undertook at once to save the remnants of the forest and found the population leagued against her to guard its prey.

At the end of six months, Mademoiselle felt that she was hardly strong enough for the task, and addressed herself to the King.¹ She explained to him that for the surveillance of her forest she had established a numerous guard which “cost much to support,” but that the inhabitants had

formed the habit of entering boldly into the said forest and of committing all sorts of misdemeanours, boasting that they would continue so to do; that they had just killed with a gun shot in his stomach, one of her guards for having tried to prevent a theft of wood; that they were threatening others to have them appointed collectors of imposts, which would leave them no time to guard; that they taxed them as peasants, also with other impositions; that, in one word, the best was done to render the position of guard untenable.

Mademoiselle consequently begged the King that he would particularly forbid the inhabitants to carry arms or to have them in their homes, and, on the other hand, that he would permit her guards to be armed. She reclaimed for them also certain privileges which would enable them to punish delinquents. Louis XIV. accorded all, and it proved possible to stop the depredations. On the death

¹ Her request to the King was dated February 9, 1661 (Archives of Eu).

of Mademoiselle, the forest of Eu was again filled with full-grown trees.

As to suppressing the "rights," it was useless to be first cousin to the King; this could not be accomplished. All that could be done was to prevent these rights multiplying and to limit as far as practicable their exactions. Between the possessors of these "rights" and the proprietor, there was a chronic state of hostility.

There still exist special "rights" in France; every one can for himself observe the inconvenience of the system. The only one of those interested who derived no profits from the game was the little Prince de Joinville, his creditors having continued their manœuvres to avoid any settlement.

On March 27, 1661, the Parliament of Paris rendered a decree which obliged them to accept payment. Eight years had elapsed since the death of the Duc de Joyeuse. The budget of debts had reached the sum of two millions of francs.¹ When all was finally settled, instead of having a balance for their ward, the guardians found themselves in face of a deficit of more than 150,000 francs.

We have already seen how Gaston, in his position as chief of the House, had boldly pillaged the fortune of his minor daughter. In the present case, on the contrary, it was the loss of the father which had given opportunity for the spoliation

¹ The debts amounted exactly to 2,700,718 frs. 18 sols. (*Liste des Créanciers* in Archives of the Château of Eu). It will be remembered that Mademoiselle paid for Eu 2,550,000 frs.

of a child. Mazarin had left Gaston alone as a punishment to Mademoiselle for her conduct during the Fronde. Louis XIV. seems to have taken little interest in the offshoot of the turbulent and ambitious family of Guise. In both cases, the favourable or unfavourable attitude of royalty had decided the issue of an affair of money.

Mademoiselle took official possession of Eu on August 24, 1661. An entry such as she loved had been arranged, with procession, banners, Venetian lanterns, speeches, musket salutes, and the firing of cannon from all the artillery in the city¹—one dozen pieces of cannon and forty *boîtes* upon the ramparts and eight cannon and forty *boîtes* upon the terrace of the château. Mademoiselle returned the following year, but only actually installed herself at Eu in 1663 after having obtained permission to leave Saint-Fargeau: "I am resolved to pass my winter here, without any chagrin at the thought." She watched her workmen, walked a great deal, and busied herself in the domestic offices. She also received visits: "There were many provincial people, reasonable enough; a number of persons of rank; but my heart was heavy. Comedians came to offer themselves; but I was in no humour for them. I began to be discouraged. I read; I worked; days were occupied in writing; all these things made the time pass insensibly."

This page of the *Mémoires* permits a glimpse of

¹ The account of the entry of Mademoiselle is in the Archives of the Château of Eu.

a rather restricted life. A letter from Mademoiselle to Bussy-Rabutin confirms and accentuates the impression :

Eu, November 28, 1663.

Here is the single response to your letters. I claim that you should write four to my one, and I believe that this will be better for you; for what can one send from a desert like this, in which one sees no one all winter, the roads being impracticable for people from a distance, from Paris for instance, and the winds being so strong on the plains through which neighbours must pass that the north-west wind is feared by all as a furious beast.

The situation of the Château d'Eu is melancholy enough, the sea wind truly "ferocious" in the environs. The gazettes from Paris were filled with descriptions of fêtes and visions of glory, which contrasted with the mediocrity of a provincial court. Mademoiselle had in vain decided not to be bored. She discovered that she, like the rest of France, had no life far from the King; there was nothing left but shadow.

In the memorable conversation in which Louis XIV. avowed to his mother that he was no longer master of his passions, Anne of Austria had warned him that he was "too intoxicated with his own grandeur."¹ She spoke truly; the infatuation had been rapid. The excuse for the King was the fact that the entire world shared in his self-admiration. It is not our plan to give any account of the internal government, or of diplomatic action, which relates to the early attempts of Louis XIV., so

¹ Motteville.



JEAN BAPTISTE COLBERT
After the painting by Champaign

fruitful in great results and so glorious for himself. We limit ourselves to stating the fact. The superiority of France is manifested in the first contact with England and Spain, and was not less clearly felt on the other side of the Rhine. Louis, says a German historian, possessed an influence in the German Empire, at least in its western portions, equal if not superior to the authority of the Emperor.¹

Strangers were almost always struck by the solicitude of his government for artisans and commercial people.

Without doubt, sentimental reasons did not count for much ; when Colbert forbade the collectors of taxes to take the cattle from the labourers, he was simply applying in the name of the King the principles of a good business man who considers his debtor. But the benefit was no less great. From whatever point of view one looked, France gave to other nations the impression of a progressive people. It was recognised that she had taken the position of head of Europe. The country at large felt this. It very justly considered this upward flight due to the personal efforts of its young King, and was grateful for his enormous labour.

Louis well understood this. It was a "party cry" to insist on all occasions upon the trouble which he took in his "trade of King" and the great fatigues which he endured for the public good. The *Gazette*, as an official journal, never failed to

¹ *Histoire de France*, by Leopold Ranke.

emphasise this. Every event was coloured to this end.

Apropos of a trip of eight days, the journal wrote¹: "This Prince, as indefatigable as Hercules in his labours," etc. It justified the royal ballets, which were most costly, by the excuse of the excessive brain work of the chief of state.

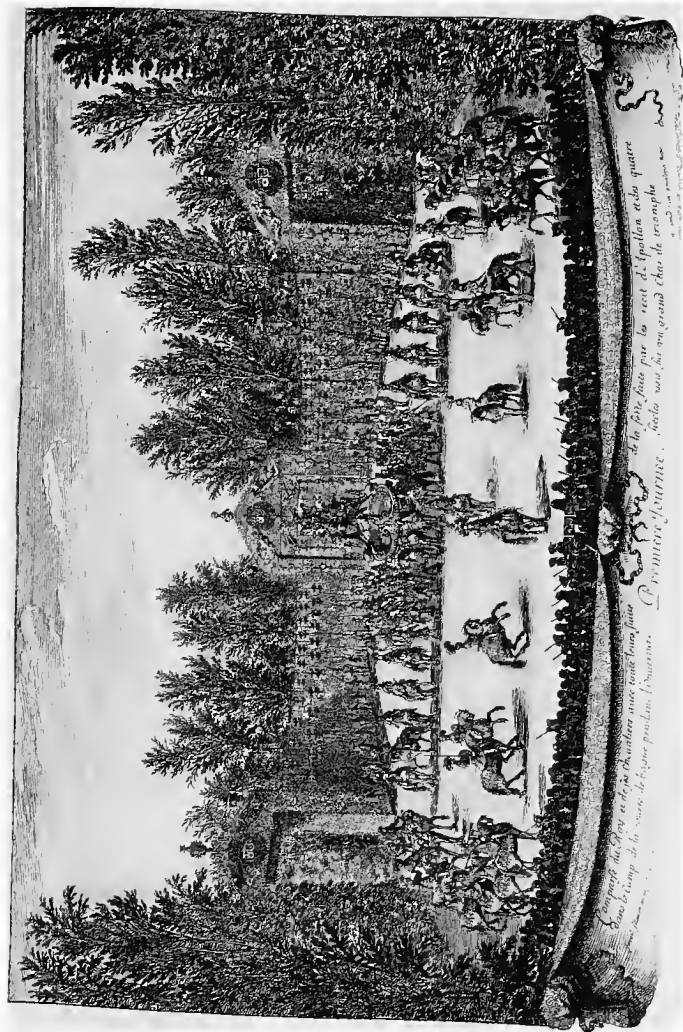
"On the eighth [January, 1663], the King, wearied with the pains with which His Majesty works so indefatigably for the welfare of his subjects, enjoyed in the palace of the Cardinal the diversion of a ballet of seven acts, called the *Ballet des Arts*."

Louis XIV. danced in the *Ballet des Arts* three times; Mlles. de Vallière, de Sévigné, and de Mortemart had a lively success in it; the latter was on the eve of becoming Mme. de Montespan.² The accounts of the representations of the new ballet alternate in the *Gazette* with the funeral ceremonies in honour of a daughter of the King and Queen, who died at six weeks of age on December 30th.

Louis XIV. had wept over his loss with that superficial sensibility in which he resembles, strange as it seems, the philosophers of the seventeenth century. He could have given points to Diderot in regard to the facility of pouring out torrents of tears, and he often astonished the Court by his emotion. He deceived the Queen from morning till evening, and he cried to see her weep when he

¹ *Numéro* of September 14, 1663.

² The marriage took place on January 28th.



"PLEASURES OF THE ISLAND OF ENCHANTMENT," SCENE ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE PLAY, BEFORE THE KING
AT VERSAILLES

From the engraving by Israel Silvestre

quitted her. He brought forth crocodile tears for the death of his father-in-law.¹ In a turn of the hand, again like Diderot, he forgot his existence, and lost on his account neither a step in the dance nor a *galant rendezvous*.

To the ballet succeeded other "relaxations," and it is curious to see the *Gazette* taking the pains to explain that the King had well earned a simple trip for pleasure (April 7, 1663): "This week the King, in order to gain some relief from the continual application for the establishing the felicity of his subjects, has enjoyed the diversion of a little journey to Saint-Germain-en-Laye and to Versailles."

The mundane chronicles² falling into line, Louis XIV. saw his "glory" as a great worker ascending into the clouds, together with his "glory" as a man of war, and in one word as "universal hero." He could not even exercise his musketeers without the *Gazette's* issuing an extra leaf upon the "admiration of all spectators."³

All France struck the same note. When he went to take possession of Dunkerque,⁴ he passed before a plaster Olympus, fabricated for the occasion. "He witnessed Neptune, who respectfully lowered

¹ Philippe IV. died September 17, 1665.

² Cf. *La Relation des Divertissements que le Roi a donnés aux Reines, etc.*, by Marigny (June, 1664).

³ Number of July, 21, 1663, and *passim*.

⁴ Louis XIV. had bought Dunkerque from the King of England. The city was delivered November 27, 1662. For account of the entrance of the King, see the *Gazette*.

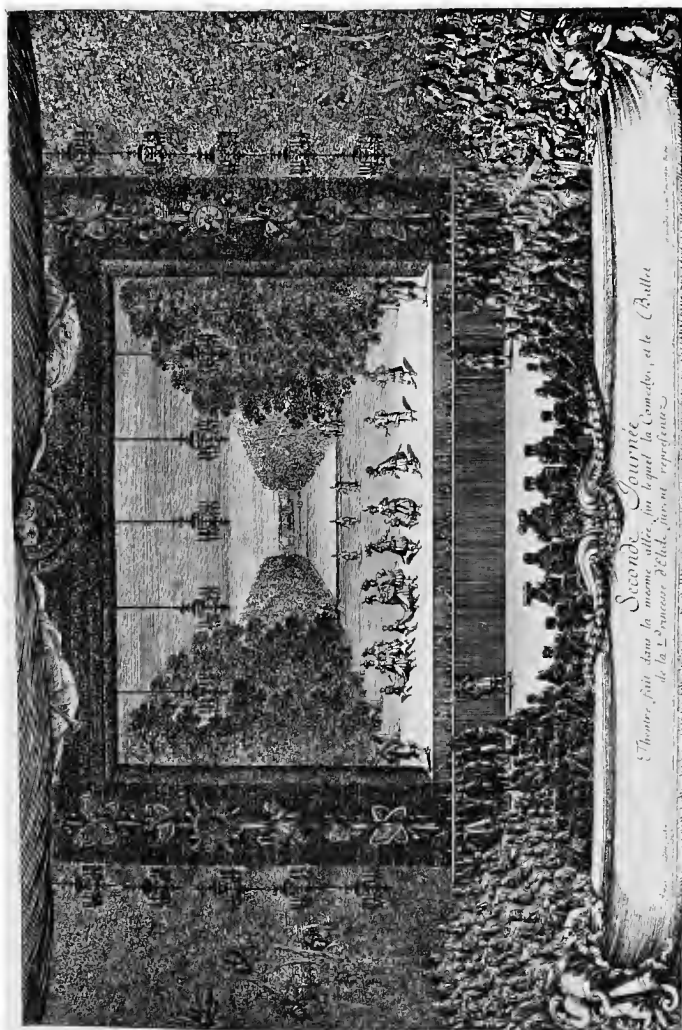
his trident; the spirits of the Earth and Sea prostrated before this mighty Prince"—that is to say, himself, and he permitted his official journal to regale the country with these follies; it was clear in his eyes that Neptune and his Court only did their duty. Every one was prepared to deify him, and he received this homage with pleasure. This atmosphere of worship was very harmful to a man born with much good sense and with many superior parts. The brilliancy of his Court, for which he was considered responsible, contributed also to the general dazzle.

The surging crowd of twenty years later did not yet exist, when the Château of Versailles was finished, and Louis XIV. held his nobility lodged under his own hand,¹ only moving from his side to make a campaign. The young Court was only numerous at intervals. It will shortly be seen how much it had increased in May, 1664. On the 27th of the following month, the Duc d'Enghien wrote from Fontainebleau: "There are almost no women here, and but few men. Never has the Court been so small."² On August 16th, also at Fontainebleau, the Queen Mother gave a ball; she had only sixteen ladies and as many men.³ In October, the Court is at Paris, and the King gives a fête: "The ball was not fine," writes the grand Condé, "the greater

¹ Louis XIV. was installed at Versailles, as a residence, May 6, 1682.

² Letter to the Queen of Poland, Marie de Gonzague (Archives of Chantilly). The Duc d'Enghien had married, December 11, 1663, Anne de Barrière, daughter of the Princess Palatine and niece of Marie de Gonzague.

³ *Journal d'Olivier d'Ormesson*.



number of the ladies being still in the country. In all Paris, only fourteen could be found."¹

During these first years, the nobility was not yet encouraged to leave all, to come to live under the shadow of the throne. Those having provincial charges "obtained with difficulty leave of absence."² Those lacking money to appear with fitting magnificence had little aid to expect from royalty; the shower of gold did not begin to fall until later, and Louis XIV. even passed for being close-fisted.

"Besides his natural temperament," said Condé, "which is not given to lavishness, he is held back by M. Colbert, who is still less given to spending, particularly when he is not persuaded of the advantage of the affair for which money must be scattered."³ It is well known that Colbert did not love waste; but he did know how to be liberal, even for expenses of luxury. No one was more convinced of the advantage of display for a sovereign, and he spared neither pains nor state pennies in making the grand festivals with which his master entertained the Court and city, unrivalled in Europe. And they were unparalleled, especially in the early years when tastes, like everything else, were young. Even the faults, by which perhaps the tastes were benefited, were youthful.

What is called impulse with the very young man

¹ Letter of October 31st to the Queen of Poland (Archives of Chantilly).

² Cf. *De La Vallière à Montespan*, by Jean Lemoine and André Lichtenberger.

³ Letter dated December 28, 1663, to the Queen of Poland (Archives of Chantilly).

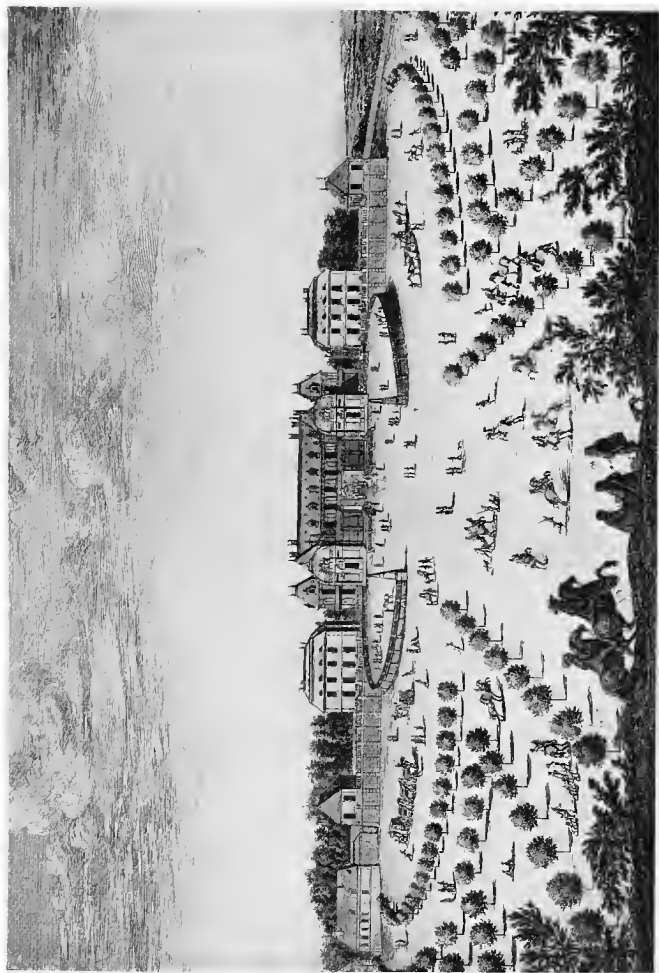
takes the name of vice with the mature, and, whatever may be said, the one is much uglier than the other.

Louis XIV. was only twenty-three when he fell in love with Mlle. de La Vallière, and the festivities which he offered in her honour expressed this freshness. There were exquisite fairy scenes with the light decorations of flowers and leaves. The most famous, on account of Molière's partial authorship, was called the *Plaisirs de l'Ile enchantée*, which was given at Versailles in May, 1664. It lasted three days, and was prolonged three days more, in spite of the great number of invitations and the difficulties occasioned by the immense crowd. The Court, says a "Relation,"¹ arrived the fifth of May, and the King entertained till the fourteenth six hundred guests, beside a quantity of people needed for the dance and comedy, and of artisans of all sorts from Paris, so numerous that it appeared a small army.

All now known of Versailles must be forgotten if we wish to picture it in 1664. Versailles was then a small village surrounded on three sides by fields and marshes.² The fourth side was occupied by a château which would have been spacious for a private person, but which meant little for a court; a few dependencies; the beginning of a garden planted by Le Nôtre. That was all.

¹ See the *Molière* of the *Grands Écrivains*, v., iv.

² See the contemporary engravings. Some reproductions will be found in the beautiful work of M. de Nolhac, *La Création de Versailles*.



GENERAL VIEW OF THE CHÂTEAU OF VERSAILLES
From the engraving by Israel Silvestre, 1664

Colbert considered Versailles already too large, as soon as Louis XIV. decided to offer anything more to his guests than the four walls of their chambers. It will be remembered¹ that when Mademoiselle came to Saint-Germain to visit the Queen Mother she brought her own furniture and cook. Not even food was provided. This was the general rule.

Louis XIV. aspired to great hospitality, and commenced his reform at Versailles. "What is very peculiar in this house," wrote Colbert in 1663, "is that his Majesty has desired all apartments given to guests to be furnished. He also orders every one to be fed and provided with all necessities, even to the wood and candles in the chambers, which has never been the custom in royal establishments."

Colbert was evidently in a bad humour. There were, however, but few apartments to offer in the Château of Versailles; the 600 guests soon perceived this fact themselves.

The journal of Olivier d'Ormesson contains on the date of May 13 the following lines: "This same day, Mme. de Sévigné has related to us the diversions of Versailles, which have lasted from Wednesday till Sunday²: courses of bague, ballets, comedies, fireworks, and other beautiful inventions; but all the courtiers were enraged, for the King took no care of them, and Monsieurs de Guise and

¹ See the *Youth of La Grande Mademoiselle*.

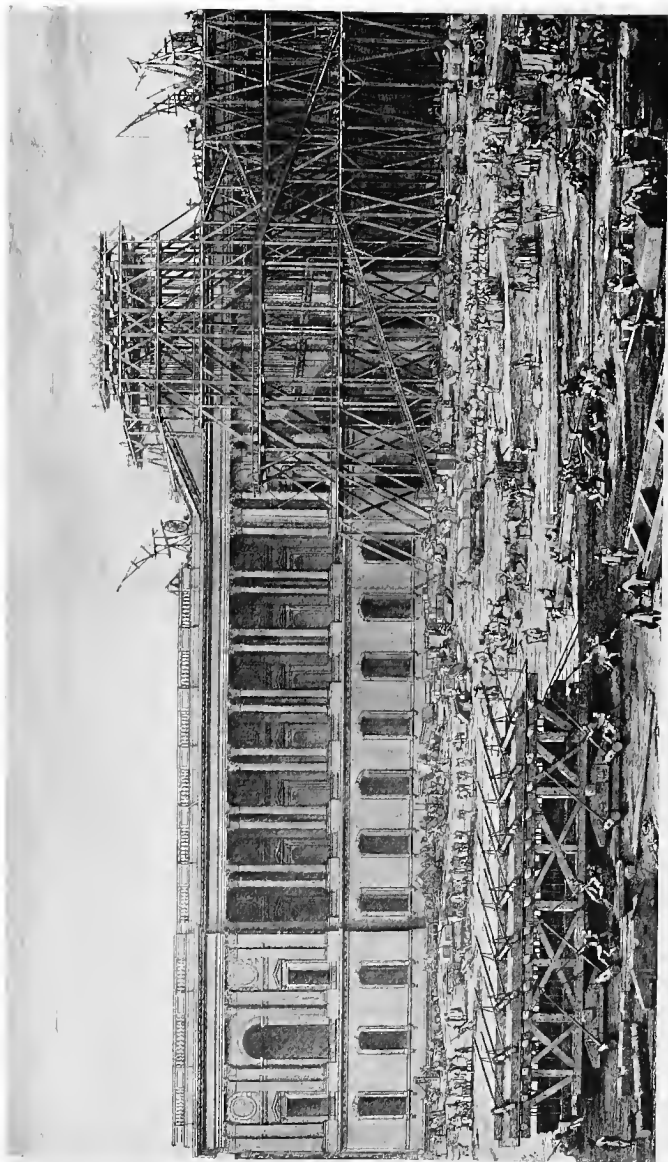
² From the 7th to the 11th of May, the first two days and the last two not counted.

d'Elbeuf could hardly find a hole in which to shelter themselves." It is to be noted that the Duc de Guise must costume himself and all his lackeys.

The thème of the fête had been drawn from *Roland furieux*, and had been made to accord with up-to-date episodes, by a courtier expert in this kind of work, the Duc de Saint-Aignan. During three days and three nights, a volunteer company, composed of Louis XIV., Molière, and the greatest nobles of France, with the prettiest actresses of Paris, embellished the imaginations of Ariosto, in the presence of two queens and of an immense Court which seemed, says the *Gazette*, to have "exhausted the Indies"¹ in order to cover itself with precious stones. Halls of verdure, arches of flowers, and the vault of heaven formed the frame in which deployed the mythological processions, the games of chivalry, the ballets, the festivities for the "little army," and the first two representations of Molière, of which one was to be the striking literary event of the century. In the evening, lamps hung upon the trees were lighted and the fête continued during the night. Gentle and tender music softened this apotheosis of love, of which the heroine—and this gave an added charm—remained hidden in the crowd; Louise de La Vallière was still neither "recognised" nor duchess.

The first of the great days of the fête was

¹ Number of February 3, 1663, apropos of a ball given at the Louvre by the King on January 31st.



THE FRONT OF THE LOUVRE IN COURSE OF ERECTION
From the engraving by S. le Clerc, 1677

open to all. The King of France and the flower of the nobility as Paladins of Charlemagne, clothed and armed "à la grecque," according to the seventeenth century ideas of local colour, took part in a tournament before a sumptuous assembly who, at the appearance of the master, uttered "cries of joy and admiration."¹

Louis XIV. sought these exhibitions. He shone in them and attributed to them an importance which in his *Mémoires* he explains to his son. He believed them very efficacious for binding together the affections of the people, above all those of high rank, and the sovereign. The populace have always loved spectacles, and for the nobility, the more closely the King keeps it at Court, the more pains he must take to show that there is no aversion between sovereign and subject, but simply a question of reason and duty. Nothing serves better for this than carrousels and other diversions of the same nature: "This society of pleasure, which gives to the courtiers an honest familiarity with us, touches and charms them more than can be told."

The partakers in the "Tournament" of 1664 had in reality been very proud of the honour done them. They appeared covered with gold, silver, and jewelry, escorted by pages and gentlemen gallantly equipped. After them, defiled allegorical

¹ For this portion, see the *Gazette* of May 17th, the letters from Loret of the 10th and 17th, various *Relations du temps*, the *Molière* of the *Grands Écrivains*, etc.

chariots, personages of fable, and strange animals, Molière as the god Pan, one of his comrades mounted upon an elephant, another upon a camel.

At the supper in the open air, which terminated the day, the royal table was served by the *corps de ballet*, who, dancing and whirling bore in the different dishes. The cavaliers of the tournament, with their helmets covered with feathers of various colours, and wearing the mantles of the course, stood erect behind the guests. Two hundred masks, bearing torches of white wax illumined this admirable living picture, worthy of the great poet who inspired it.

The next day was occupied in giving to the two hundred guests a lesson in natural philosophy, no longer symbolical and veiled, but clear and direct; it was perfectly comprehended and the spectators were convinced. The lesson was from Molière, who had written his *Princesse d'Elide*¹ in the design well formed of "celebrating" and "justifying" the loves of the King and La Vallière. The *Récit de l'Aurore* will be recalled which opens the piece.

Dans l'âge où l'on est amiable,
Rien n'est si beau que d'aimer.

Soupirer librement pour un amant fidèle,
Et braver ceux qui voudraient vous blâmer.

It will also be recollected that the five acts which follow are only the development, full of insistence, of that invitation to the ladies of the Court not to

¹ *Louise de La Vallière*, by J. Lair.



JEAN BAPTISTE POQUELIN MOLIERE
After the painting by Noël Coypel

merit the "name of cruel." After serious affairs, innocent pleasures followed, the most applauded of which was a piece of fireworks which embraced "the heavens, the earth, and the waters."

Every one was already thinking of departure, when on Monday, May 12th, Molière presented the first act of *Tartuffe*.

The connivance of the King appears well established. Father Rapin relates that the "sect of the *Dévots*" had, since the time of Mazarin, rendered itself so insupportable by its indiscreet advice, that the King, "in order to ridicule them, had permitted Molière to represent them on the stage." The *Dévots* had seen the blow coming, and did their best to avoid it; the annals of the *Compagnie du Saint Sacrement* affirm this.¹ They report that there was "strong talk" in the séance of April 17th, in the attempt to accomplish the suppression of the wicked comedy *Tartuffe*.

Each member of the *Compagnie* charged himself to speak to any friends who had credit at Court, "begging aid in preventing its representation." The effort was vain. *Tartuffe* was acted. The spectators divined without difficulty whom Molière had in view; and the *Dévots* heard with emotion this openly significant expression of contempt of religious forms, in less than one week after the *Princesse d'Elide* had thrown its weight upon the side of questionable morals.

From the point of view of a general principle,

¹ See *La Cabale des Dévots*, by M. Raoul Allier.

the two pieces naturally followed each other ; they were two chapters of the same gospel. The King had the air of being about to pass to the enemy and of uniting himself with the Libertins. The Cabal made a desperate effort and *Tartuffe* was forbidden ; at the same time no one imagined that the battle was terminated.

An extraordinary agitation around the King might have been seen during the weeks which followed the fêtes of Versailles. The Court at once departed for Fontainebleau ; the two parties disputed the entire summer over the young monarch.

Louis himself had skirmished with both. The King felt at the same time a personal revolt against the constraints of the Church, and the need of a politic catholicity which would sustain the practices of religion for State reasons, because he could not do without their aid. These two fashions of thinking can easily be accommodated together, and the King was in train to learn how to do this. After a little delay, the conciliation between the two points of view was completed in his mind.

While waiting, he lived in the midst of floods of tears. The summer was a very troubled one.

Such events held the attention of Paris, but the poor Mademoiselle, forgotten in the Château d'Eu, fretted so much that at length her pride was conquered. " Upon the news of the pregnancy of the Queen," says the *Mémoires*, " I decided to write, dreaming that perhaps the King wished to be besought," and she abased herself to do this. She at

first expressed the hope that the child might be a son. "I exaggerated with good faith the desire which I had, and I showed the grief I felt in being forced to remain so long without the honour of seeing him [the King]. I said everything I could to oblige him to permit me to return."

She wrote at the same time to Colbert, who was considered the powerful man of the ministry :

EU, March 23, 1664.

MONSIEUR COLBERT :

In bearing testimony to the King of the joy which I have in the pregnancy of the Queen, I am daring to command his good graces, and the permission for an audience to ask them in person.

I trust that you will assist me with your good offices to obtain so precious a favour. If I cannot succeed in obtaining this, I beg to be permitted to pass through Paris before May,¹ having three considerable lawsuits at this date. I look, on this occasion, for the continuation of your good offices.

ANNE-MARIE-LOUISE D'ORLÉANS.

The King waited two months before responding :

TO MY COUSIN MADemoisELLE, ELDEST DAUGHTER OF THE
LATE MONSEIGNEUR DUC D'ORLÉANS

MY COUSIN :

It consoles me much to find you in the state of mind which your letter shows. I willingly forget the past and permit you not only to pass through Paris, but also either to dwell there, or to choose any other place of residence which may be agreeable to you, and even to come here in case you wish it, if you assure me that your conduct will always give me reason for cherishing you and for treating you properly as a personage so nearly related.

¹ A doubtful phrase.

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I thank you for the affection with which you write to me of the Queen's pregnancy and pray, etc.

LOUIS.

Some days later Mademoiselle was *en route* for Fontainebleau, well resolved to show herself. She was transported with joy at having recovered liberty of movement, but the Court at this time inspired her with terror. The ground had become too slippery for a person of her temperament, loving so much her independence and rebellious to all discipline.

CHAPTER IV.

Increasing Importance of the Affairs of Love—The Corrupters of Morals—
Birth of Dramatic Music and its Influence—Love in Racine—
Louis XIV. and the Nobility—The King is Polygamous.

IT was neither through compassion nor through friendship that Louis XIV. had recalled from exile a second time his cousin Mlle. de Montpensier. He had renounced the idea of marrying her to Alphonse VI. since she persisted in her refusal, but he pursued the plan of giving her in marriage "where it would be useful to his service."

And there was reason for entertaining another project. While she was in penitence at Eu, one of the little sisters, Mlle. de Valois, had married the Duc de Savoie, Charles Emmanuel II., and had died (January 14, 1664), at the end of some months of wedded life. The widowhood of princes is rarely a matter of long duration. The King had immediately arranged to offer the millions of the Grande Mademoiselle to the Duc de Savoie, it being of first importance to bring back this territory to France, and to recompense the King of Portugal by giving him one of the princesses of Nemours.¹

¹ The Mlles. de Nemours were daughters of Elisabeth de Vendôme, sister of the Duc de Beaufort, and of Henri de Savoie, Duc de Nemours, who was killed in a duel by his brother-in-law (July 30, 1652). The younger sister married Alphonse VI. June 28, 1666.

The new combination was well known in the political world. One reads in the journal of Olivier d'Ormesson on the date of June 4, 1664: "M. Le Pelletier¹ tells me of the return of Mlle. d'Orléans, and that the King had written to her with his own hand, permitting her to come back, without saying anything to the Queen Mother; but this was with the Savoie marriage in sight." Louis XIV. had not resigned himself without effort to the idea of procuring so fine an establishment for an ancient Frondeuse. It may be seen through a letter from the grand Condé to the Queen of Poland that the royal rancour had yielded for reasons of State:

FONTAINEBLEAU, June 3, 1664.

Mademoiselle having written to the King about the pregnancy of the Queen, his Majesty has himself responded, which is a mark of softened feelings, and every one believes that she will return and that his Majesty will consent to her marriage with M. de Savoie, which up to this time he has not desired, because he preferred that of Mlle. d'Alençon²: but as she is very ugly, and as an additional distinction is badly marked with small-pox, he has reason to believe that M. de Savoie will not be willing to espouse her; and he fears that there may be a question of a union with the Austrian House, and thus I believe, in spite of his own dislikes, he will wish to hasten the marriage of Mademoiselle which, however, is not so certain as it appears.³

There was no danger of pouts in regard to this

¹ Claude Le Pelletier, then President of Inquests. After, he was Minister of State and Controller-General of Finances.

² Mlle. d'Alençon, the second of the half-sisters of Mademoiselle.

³ *Archives de Chantilly*.

prospective husband ; this the King well understood. Mademoiselle arrived at Fontainebleau during the first fortnight of June, 1664. The entire Court had met her upon the highway.

Mademoiselle was the first to whom the King had yielded since assuming the reins of government. This was a glory ; she, indeed, felt it and held her head high. Louis XIV. had the good taste to ignore this attitude. He greeted her graciously and limited his vengeance to teasing her during the few days she passed with him. "Confess," said he to her, "that you are very bored." She cried, "I assure you not at all, and I often think that the Court is very much deceived if it believes me disenchanted, for I have not experienced a moment's dulness."

The King, however, believed only what pleased him. One evening, after the play, he led her upon a little terrace and spoke in these terms : "The past must be forgotten. Be persuaded that you will receive all good treatment from me in the future, and that I am contemplating your establishment. Naturally, M. de Savoie is a better match than formerly ; his mother is dead. He will recognise the difference between your sister and yourself. Thus you will be very happy and I shall work seriously to accomplish this." The King's discourse was followed by an exchange of effusions. "We embraced each other, my cousin and I," said the King in reappearing before his Court, and the signal word was at once comprehended.

The Grande Mademoiselle passed an almost triumphal week at Fontainebleau. The repose of provincial life was hard to bear in comparison. The King, the ministers, and the ambassadors all worked for the marriage. There was nothing to do but to leave them to act. Mademoiselle wished to aid. To commence she undertook to reduce to silence the old Madame, who was outraged by her eagerness to replace her younger sister.

Dissatisfactions grew into quarrels and Louis XIV. was forced to intervene, and to silence all these women. He wrote to Mademoiselle :

TO MY COUSIN

MY COUSIN:

I cannot prevent my aunt's people from talking, but I hardly believe that she would say that I have promised her protection against you.

I love you and consider you, as much as the most pressing desires which pass through your brain are capable of inspiring me, and assuredly it is my intention to give you pleasure in every degree possible. I only avow that you can do much on your part in facilitating things a little; this is my only request, and having nothing to add to so sincere an explanation of my sentiments, I finish this letter, praying God, etc.

Written at Fontainebleau, July 12, 1664.

Signed: Louis.¹

It was beyond the strength of Mademoiselle to abstain from interference. Her anxiety to be the fly on the wheel drew upon her a new letter from the King. The tone is that of a very impatient man.

¹ *Œuvres de Louis XIV. Lettres particulières*, Paris, 1806.

TO MY COUSIN

MY COUSIN:

I see clearly by your last letter that you are not accurately informed of what is passing in Piedmont; for I have been obliged to be very badly satisfied with my ambassador, in that he has executed my orders with so much warmth that the Duc de Savoie complains through his despatches to Count Carrocio of apparently being forced into an action which should be the freest, even to the smallest particular. Judge by this fact if the conduct proposed and suggested to you is wise?

I perceive even malice in those who give you such advice; for their desire is to put you in such a state of mind that if the affair fail it is I who am to blame.

I see that you are already persuaded that success depends upon my simple wish expressing my desire on one side or the other, but I am not resolved to conduct myself according to the caprices of those people.

I have told you that I sincerely wish your satisfaction and I again affirm it. The friendship alone which I have for you would give me this feeling, and I realise also that the scheme is beneficial for me.

You must not doubt, therefore, that I will do all which will be really useful in furthering the affair; as for the means, it is not too much to say that I see better what should be done than those who speak and write to you. However, I pray God, etc.

At Vincennes, September 2, 1664.

Signed; Louis.

The King spoke the truth: the Duc de Savoie did not want the Grande Mademoiselle. Charles Emmanuel had never digested the affront received upon the journey to Lyons, from which he had seen his sister return Duchess of Parma when he had imagined to receive her as Queen of France.¹ He

¹ *L' ambassadeur de la Fuente au roi d'Espagne*; Paris, January 27, 1664. (*Archives de la Bastille*.) The Princesse de Savoie refused by Louis XIV: had decided to marry the Duc de Parma.

was not averse to revenging himself on Louis XIV. by refusing a princess of his family whose age above all "made him afraid, for he desired children."¹

He had also an account to regulate with Mademoiselle, who had disdained him at the time in which she was young and beautiful. At this distant date, Charles Emmanuel, although her junior by seventeen years, had not concealed the fact that he would have been ready to marry her, "so much did he esteem her person and also her great wealth."²

But it was with the Duc de Savoie as with the Prince of Wales, and later with the Prince de Lorraine :

Quoi ? moi ! quoi ? ces gens-là ! l'on radote, je pense,
A moi les proposer ! hélas ! ils font pitié :
Voyez un peu la belle espèce.³

Having become less exacting with years, Mademoiselle at length found a man who did not disdain to play the part of substitute for his betters.

The Duke remained firm, and it was again a Nemours,⁴ sister of the Queen of Portugal, who inherited the husband destined for the Grande Mademoiselle.

Equally difficult, the same fate fell upon Mademoiselle as upon the marriageable daughter in La Fontaine : she was to be reduced to wed a cadet

¹ *Mémoires de Mme. de Motteville.*

² The Archbishop of Embrun to Father Brienne; Turin Aug. 1, 1659.

³ La Fontaine : *La Fille*, fable, published for the first time in the edition 1679.

⁴ Marie-Jeanne-Baptiste de Nemours married Charles Emmanuel II., May 11, 1665.

of Gascony, the *malotru* of the fable. I believe that La Fontaine had Mademoiselle in his mind when writing *La Fille*. It has been queried whether this subject was not borrowed from the *Epigram* of Martial. There is no need for so distant a search. On July 8, 1664, La Fontaine had been appointed "gentleman-in-waiting to the dowager Duchesse d'Orléans."¹ He was, therefore, in a position to be well informed concerning the projects for marriage which failed, and the ridiculous actions of the daughter of the house. We possess his confidences upon the household of the Luxembourg, on the one side of the apartments of Madame, on the other those of Mademoiselle, in an epistle dedicated to Mignon, the little dog of his mistress.

For La Fontaine, the Luxembourg was the palace in which there was no place for lovers. The tender passion was forbidden *chez* Madame, where it was necessary to be contented with the "pious smiles" of Mme. de Crissé, the original of the Countess de Pimbesche, and to bear in mind the presence of an old Capuchin become Bishop of Bethléem in Nivernais,² who supervised the conversations. "Speak low," says the letter *Pour Mignon*.

Si l'évêque de Bethléem

Nous entendait, Dieu sait la vie.

There was not even the resource of fleeing to the "Divinity" opposite. Under that shelter, lovers

¹ And not Madame Henriette, as has been said in error.

² Bethléem was a suburb of Clamecy.

were less well regarded year by year, and La Fontaine divined why: the antipathy always evinced by Mademoiselle was now doubled by envy.

The check in regard to the Savoie marriage had brought on a painful crisis in the life of this poor unattached heroine. For the first time, she had been made to feel that she had passed the marriageable age, and she was one of those unfortunates who cannot easily resign themselves to the fall from the purely feminine portion of existence.

The revolt against nature frequently causes whimsicalities; a terrible injustice toward those doleful creatures who often have asked no better than to obey nature's laws in becoming wives and mothers. Nervous maladies give to the soul-tragedy a burlesque outside, and the world laughs without comprehending. Mademoiselle was one of these unfortunates. La Fontaine had well discovered it when he wrote:

Son miroir lui disait: "Prenez vite un mari."
Je ne sais quel désir le lui disait aussi:
Le désir peut loger chez une précieuse.

It is very difficult to relate the decline of the Grande Mademoiselle without provoking a smile at least, and it would be a pity, however, if this proud figure should leave the even slight impression of that of Bérise. She was left disabled, without aim in life, at the very moment in which women in general were being excluded from action, after having been slightly intoxicated with power under

Anne of Austria. Men had at that time encouraged women to enter into public life. Thanks to masculine complicity, feminine influence and power had mounted high, and the weaker sex enjoyed one of the most romantic moments of its entire history.

The habit of treating women as the equals of men had been fully formed when the will of a monarch who distrusted them precipitated the sex from its giddy height.

It has been seen *à propos* of La Vallière with what contempt Louis XIV. spoke of women in his *Mémoires*. Upon this subject he had truly Oriental ideas, approaching those held by his Spanish ancestors, inherited by them from the Moors. Louis could not do without women, but he wanted them only for amusement. He did not really believe them capable of giving anything else, judging them inferior and dangerous, perhaps in remembrance of Marie Mancini, who had almost enticed him into a crime against royalty.

Hardly had the King come to power when all who had issued from their sphere must re-enter it. Love was the only affair of importance in which women were permitted to share. Louis XIV. made no exception in favour of his mistresses. Mme. de Montespan tyrannised a little over him in spite of his fine theories. The others, however, were looked upon only in the light of beautiful and amusing creatures.

When, towards the end of the reign, Mme. de Maintenon had the glory of again raising the sex to the position of being esteemed by the King, she

alone benefited. In general, nothing was gained for women at large; the impression in regard to their true position had been too deep. Suddenly reduced to an existence with a narrow horizon, women found it colourless and mean. They demanded love, since this was all that was left to them to supply those violent emotions to which they had become accustomed in the camps and councils. As the result of this new attitude many strange events occurred, but they were little noticed as long as the Queen Mother remained of this world. Anne of Austria succeeded in saving appearances, if in nothing else. Once dead, there came the downfall, and strange things became frightful ones.

It was at Versailles in the midst of the Bengal fires of the "Île enchantée" that the Queen Mother felt the first pangs of the cancer which finally caused her death.

Paris followed with grief the course of her illness. Anne of Austria, remaining without influence, had again become popular. "She preserves harmony," wrote d'Ormesson, "and although she cannot be credited with much good, she still prevents much that is evil" (June 5, 1665). It is known that it was owing to her that a certain decency was maintained at the Court of France; that without her, Louis XIV. and his sister-in-law Henrietta would not have perceived in time that they already cared too much for each other and that the rumour of this was "making much noise at Court."¹

¹ Mme. de La Fayette, *Histoire de Madame Henriette*.



MADAME HENRIETTE D'ORLÉANS

From the painting by Mignard in the National Portrait Gallery
(Photograph by Walker, London)

The Queen Mother was forced to open eyes which wished to remain closed. She had spoken frankly, and her plainness had perhaps saved the kingdom of France from an ineffaceable stain. Such service cannot be forgotten by honest people. To gratitude was added a sincere admiration for her courage under suffering. The poor woman endured without complaint, and with an incredible tranquillity, nine months of sharp pain increased by the barbarous remedies applied by a crowd of quacks.

In the royal family, the sentiments were mixed. Louis XIV., as Mme. de Motteville had well remarked, was a man full of "contradictions." He cherished his mother. During a previous malady, a short time before the cancer declared itself, he had cared for her night and day with a devotion and also a skill which astonished the attendants.

The thought of now losing her gave him seasons of stifling sobs. At the same time, his mother was a little too much of a personage. She troubled him by her clairvoyance. He experienced a certain relief at the knowledge that the time was approaching when she would no longer be able to watch his course of life. In all probability, he was himself ignorant of this feeling, but it was apparent to observers. When she was actually dying, affection bore away all other considerations, and the King almost fainted. Hardly was she interred when the pleasure of feeling himself entirely free again became ascendant.

The attachment of Monsieur for his mother was his best emotion. His grief possessed no hidden relief and forced him to be always near the invalid's bed. "The odour was so frightful," reports Mademoiselle, "that after seeing the wound dressed it was impossible to sup." Monsieur passed all his time in the chamber and tried to demonstrate his tenderness. Sometimes most ridiculous ideas occurred to him; but he was not the less touching, through his never-failing tears, on account of his sincerity.

At length, Anne of Austria herself sent her son away. Monsieur returned to his pleasures and forgot his grief in them; he would not have been Philippe Duc d'Anjou if he had acted differently. When the end drew near, timid and submissive as he was, he would not be sent away. The King withdrew, obeying the custom which forbids princes, as formerly gods, to witness death. Louis twice told his brother not to remain longer, and only received the response "that he could not obey him in this, but he promised that it was the only point, during his entire life, on which he would ever disobey."¹

A cry of Monsieur piercing the walls announced to Louis that the end had come.

The young Queen Marie-Thérèse, who was losing all, justified the reputation of "fool" which the Court gave her. She permitted herself to be persuaded that her position would be made higher,

¹ *Mémoires de Mme. de Motteville.*

through all the privileges left to her by the death of the Queen Mother, and she was more than half consoled by this chimera.

Mademoiselle scrupulously observed the proprieties ; which is all that can be said. Anne of Austria had emphasised in a solemn hour the tenacity of the rancour against her niece. The evening before death, she took farewell of all. Two only appeared forgotten ; " I was astonished, after all that had passed," relates Mademoiselle, " that she did not say a word to M. le Prince or to me, who were both there, especially slighting me who was brought up near her." It was precisely on account of " all that had passed." Anne of Austria gave a good example to the King : she expired without pardoning the leaders of the Fronde.

Great changes followed this death. Louis XIV. lost his mother January 20, 1660 ; on the 27th of the same month, a deputation came from Parliament " to pay their compliments to the King." D'Ormesson was of this body. " I went afterwards," says his Journal, " to mass with the King, at which there were present the Queen, M. le Dauphin, Monsieur and Mlle. de La Vallière, whom the Queen has taken near her, through complaisance for the King, in which she shows her wisdom." Louis XIV. officially presented his mistress to the people, and assigned her rank immediately below that of his legitimate wife. During his mother's life he would not have dared to do this.

Two months later he was delivered from the

Cabale des Dévots, and from its intrusive observations, through the disappearance of the *Compagnie du Saint Sacrement*. It does not appear impossible that the death of the Queen may have slightly hastened this event. Anne of Austria had been acquainted with the society for a long period,¹ and had testified for it during many years of absolute devotion. She had guarded it from Mazarin. She did more: there is proof that she deceived her minister for the sake of the *Compagnie*. The situation changed with the death of the Cardinal. There is nothing to warrant the belief that Anne of Austria, whether restrained by fear or by some scruple, was willing, after the death of Mazarin, to deceive Louis XIV. for the sake of a secret society.

Actively pursued by Colbert, who divined an occult force behind the adversaries to his power, the *Compagnie* fell back upon its habitual protector, and had the bitter disappointment of beseeching in vain. The devotion of Anne of Austria was henceforth to be a silent one. As long as she remained on earth, all hope was not lost; she might be brought back to the bosom of the fold, and better success might be looked for another time. Her death caused the final disorganisation. The society had not, during a long period, dared to reunite. Deprived of the mother of the King, it practically yielded. It dissolves and vanishes into thin air. Its register stops April 8, 1666. Have the records of the various

¹ See Raoul Allier, *La Cabale des Dévots*.

prosecutions been destroyed or scattered? Have all the documents been destroyed through prudence? Suppositions are free. It is with this mysterious brotherhood as with those water-courses which disappear under the ground. Their traces are lost. It even happens that they bear another name when they again spring to the surface. Such without doubt has been the fate of the "*Compagnie du Saint Sacrement*," for the sectarian spirit which has been its most significant mark has never lost its rights in the land; in our own days we still see it placing itself in France at the service of very different schools of thought and belief.

In this beginning of April (1666) in which the *Cabale des Dévots* had avowed itself vanquished, the Court was struck with the animation of the King.

"A journey was made to Mouchy," wrote Mademoiselle, "where three days were passed in reviews. The King ordered a quantity of troops to be assembled; he also invited many ladies. All these were in mourning. There was much diversion; the King was in gay spirits; he sang and made verses during the progress." Although these were not the only ones, Louis did not compose many songs during his life.

He enjoyed feeling free from those wearisome persons who had abused the patronage of his mother in creating themselves censors of their sovereign. No one except his confessor and his preachers concerned themselves further with his sins.

When Bossuet and Bourdaloue were appointed Court preachers they restrained themselves but little ; but Louis XIV. bore their reproaches with equanimity. It was their duty, and Christians of that date, even bad ones, recognised what they owed to the Church, and bent their heads before the pulpit. Bossuet cried out in the presence of the entire Court that "immoral manners are always bad manners," and that "there is a God in heaven who avenges the sins of the people, and who, above all, avenges the sins of Kings."¹ He launched apostrophies at Mlle. de La Vallière: "O creatures, shameful idols, withdraw from this Court. Shadows, phantoms, dissipate yourselves in the presence of the truth ; false love, deceitful love, canst thou stand before it ?"

Bourdaloue, who found Mme. de Montespan in the place of Mlle. de La Vallière, reproached the King for his "debauches," and openly demanded of him in his sermon if he had kept his promise of rupture: "Have you not again seen this person fatal to your firmness and constancy ? Have you no more sought occasions so *dangerous* for you ?"

Mme. de Sévigné went one day to hear him at Saint-Germain, where he preached a Lenten sermon before the King and Queen. She returned confounded and angry at his boldness: "We heard after dinner the sermon of Bourdaloue, who speaks with all his force, launching truths with lowered bridle, attacking adultery on every side ; regardless

¹ Lenten sermons for the year 1662.



MADAME DE MONTESPAN

From the engraving by Flameng after the painting by Mignard

of all, he rides straight on.”¹ Louis XIV. accepted these public reproaches without protest; there was, however, but little result.

One effect of the death of the Queen Mother was that rivals to Mlle. de La Vallière were free to appear; also there was a great increase in the number of charlatans and alchemists, who found more easily an aristocratic clientèle. Diviners and sorcerers also played an important rôle in the love life of this society—the most polished in the world.

The practice of the magic arts was at that date considered one of the most flourishing Parisian industries. The inhabitants of the streets little frequented, or of the suburbs, were accustomed to the movement which took place in the early morning, or in the evening at dusk, around certain isolated houses.² People of all ranks, on foot, in carriages or in chairs, women masked or muffled, succeeded each other before a closed door, which only opened at a particular sign.

The state of mind which led this crowd to the clairvoyant was to be found in all classes of society, from the highest to the lowest. Public credulity was passing through a period of expansion, apparently very much at odds with the splendid intellect of France at that date, at which, however, those who believe the simple formulas of history will not be astonished. Two of our grand classic writers

¹ Letter of March 29, 1680.

² *Archives de la Bastille*, by François Ravaisson, vols. iv., v., and vi., *passim*.

have left pages which bear witness to the extent of the evil, existing at the very moment in which France became the actual head of Europe.

Molière mocks at occult science and its adepts, through a long play, or rather a libretto for a ballet,¹ which he wrote for the King in 1670, named as we already know, *Les Amants Magnifiques*. The *dramatis personæ* are divided into two camps according to a rule of his own, in a fashion very unpleasant for the grandees of this world, Molière allowing them the precedence in folly. It was sufficient for his heroes to be illustrious through rank, to endow them with a blind faith in all conjurers. "The truth of astrology," says the Prince Iphicrate, "is an incontestable fact, and no one can dispute against the certitude of its predictions." This is also the opinion of the Prince Timoclès: "I am sufficiently incredulous in regard to many things, but as for astrology, there is nothing more certain and more constant than the success with which horoscopes may be drawn." The Princess Aristione also agrees, and is anxious in finding that her daughter is less convinced.

This is a commencement of a freedom of thought, and one cannot know to what it may lead: "My daughter," says the mother, "you have a little incredulity which never leaves you."

Disbelief in astrology and sorcery is represented in the play of Molière, figuring in the name of

¹ See the review of the play in *Molière of the Grands Écrivains de la France* (Hachette).

“Clitidas, court jester,” and of another person of obscure birth, “Sostrate, general of the army,” who takes the part of Clitidas against the calmer prophets and other exploiters of human folly.

There is nothing more agreeable [says he] than all the great promises of this sublime knowledge. To transform everything into gold; to find immortal life; to heal by words; to make oneself beloved by the person of one's desires; to know all the secrets of the future; to call down from the sky at will impressions upon metals which bear happiness to mortals¹; to command demons; to render armies invisible and soldiers invulnerable—all this is doubtless charming, and there are people who have no trouble in believing in the possibility; it is the easiest thing in the world for some men to be convinced, but for me, I avow that my grosser mind has some difficulty in comprehending and in believing.

La Fontaine has treated the same subject in three of his fables. It is in one of these, *Les Devineuses*, published in 1678, consequently before the famous drama *Les Poisons*, in which he shows himself very well acquainted with what the police had not yet been sufficiently clever to discover. He knew marvellously well the existence of the *poudre de succession* and of the *poudre pour l'amour*:

Une femme, à Paris, faisait la pythonisse.
On l'allait consulter sur chaque événement;
Perdait-on un chiffon, avait-on un amant,
Une mari vivant trop, au gré de son épouse,
Une mère fâcheuse, une femme jalouse,
Chez la Devineuse on courait,
Pour se faire annoncer ce que l'on désirait.

¹ Allusion to certain talismans.

The warning was not heeded, and it needed the "burning chamber" of 1680 to make honest people comprehend that "clairvoyant" was too often another name for "seller of poisons." La Fontaine had, however, given no new information about the confidence inspired. This fact was already too well known.

This dangerous agency, of which we have already had a glimpse on the occasion of the first search for Lesage and Mariette, merits some descriptive details. In Paris, during a period of twenty years, it was so mixed up with intrigues and crimes that it exercised a real influence over the morals of the Parisian world and through it over the affairs at Court.

Like a wave of madness it swept over the heads especially of the women. Many of these, even those not directly mingling in political life, were in a state of revolt, inconsolable for having lost the importance acquired during the civil troubles.

Women had been emancipated by the force of affairs. During the actual fighting and the general disorders which ensued, the habit of remaining in the shade of obedience was lost; also the considering themselves only as objects of luxury.

Louis XIV. had undertaken the task of bringing the sex back to the playing of a decorative or utilitarian rôle. It was almost as if to-day we should demand of our daughters, so free, so mingled with the general movement, to return suddenly to the self-effacement and the thousand restraints of our own youth. They would be transported with rage.

In 1666, the larger portion of the clients of the necromancer sought above everything else a secret by the aid of which they might shake off the yoke that had again fallen upon their shoulders. The husband was the natural incarnation of this yoke. It was therefore against him that the revolt was habitually directed. The wives addressed themselves to a clairvoyant. The first consultation was generally innocent enough.

The clairvoyant counselled new-comers to go to the good Saint Denis, always a succour for women unhappy in their domestic life, and to the indefatigable Saint Antoine de Padua. She reserved until later the giving of certain powders, only hinting at their existence, the secret of which had been brought from Italy and which were sought at Paris by both provincials and strangers.

It is now known through contemporaneous documents that arsenic was an element in these powders, and that so many persons accused themselves in confession of having "poisoned some one" that the priests of Nôtre-Dame at length gave warning to the authorities (1673). Did the penitents, especially the women, always speak the truth? Popular imagination is so quickly fired when poisoning is suggested, that it may well be queried whether a portion of the unfortunates were not rather hysterical and victims of hallucinations. It is probable that the true answer will never be known. Physicians at that time were the doctors of Molière, and the science of chemistry did not exist.

With the husband softened or suppressed, the women demanded love to replace emotion in their contracted and faded existence. The task of the necromancer thus consisted in interesting God or the devil in the heart pangs of her client and of arousing an affection in the breast of the man she designated. This was the beginning for the new clients; the end was the black mass with its obscene rites or the bloody mass, for which a small infant was strangled.

All the forms of conjuration were used between the two, every charm, every talisman and many "kinds of powders," not always inoffensive. The consultations were paid for according to the rank or fortune of the clients. In default of money, a jewel was given or even a signed note, the imprudence of which last proceeding it is hardly needful to point out.

In the year of the death of Anne of Austria, one of the clairvoyants most frequented was the wife of a hosier named Antoine Montvoisin, whose shop was situated upon the Pont Marie, which to-day still unites the right bank of the Seine with the isle Saint-Louis. The Pont Marie, as almost all the bridges of Paris at that date, had a double row of houses, with shops beneath, which formed a very animated street. The affairs of Montvoisin, however, had not prospered. He had tried several commercial undertakings without success. He had been dry-goods merchant and jeweller, and had always "lost his shops," according to the expres-



LA VOISIN

From a print in the Bibliothèque Nationale

sion of his wife, Catherine Montvoisin, familiarly called "the neighbour."

It is under this latter name that she became celebrated in the annals of crime. La Voisin the fortune-teller is the same as La Voisin the poisoner. At the date of the hosiery shop, she had not yet attracted the attention of justice, in spite of her installation, but ill-assured, on the Pont Marie, which obliged her to have a double domicile, or to give rendezvous at the house of her confrère. She gained large sums of money. The price for consultation varied from a single piece to several thousand francs, or from an old rag to a necklace of precious stones, and again she drew something from the acolytes of both sexes who assisted in her wicked works. It was known from herself that her property was held in her own right, her husband having been always unfortunate in business. In spite of this precaution, the money slipped through her fingers. It is true that she had expenses, children to bring up and relatives to support. She said: "I have ten persons to feed," but she was economical for others. La Voisin gave a crown a week to her mother and brought up her daughter as a small shop-keeper. It was she herself who, in company with other misérables of her own kind, spent madly. The position of husband of a poisoner seems to have been a precarious one. Antoine Montvoisin was familiar with the nature of his wife's industry, but his conscience did not forbid his profiting by it for his own comfort. His conscience

also permitted him to appropriate to himself money entrusted to him by his wife to execute the orders for the *neuvaines*. He was as much a free-thinker as any of the Vardes or Guiches, and convinced that the *neuvaines* were absolutely useless. As to going further, to putting his own "paw in the dish," he was successfully prudent. He was never anxious; but he was actually daily in danger of being poisoned, for La Voisin could not suffer this coward. She would have liked to replace him by a veritable associate, and between the pair, there were perpetual fights for pre-eminence in deceit.

The good man Antoine would certainly have died through poisoning in spite of all his care, if he had not conceived the ingenious idea of uniting himself with an executioner, to whom he confided the situation. It was agreed between the two that, if Montvoisin should die before his wife, the hangman should speak and demand an autopsy. La Voisin became afraid. She tried to poison her husband on a journey, but did not succeed, and finally considered it safer to keep him with her.

She had benefited, as had also the entire corporation, by the hopes awakened in the breasts of many of the pretty women among the aristocracy by the death of the Queen Mother.

Anne of Austria had taken so ill the first digression of her son from the paths of virtue that the aspirants for the succession to Mlle. de La Vallière had preserved a certain discretion. When the rebuffs of the old Queen were no longer to be feared,

the passions were unchained and a flock of youthful, ambitious women addressed themselves to the "duties of fashion" in order to arrive at the good graces of the King.¹ The boldest demanded at the same time "something against Mlle. de La Vallière." Amongst these young women was found the Marquise de Montespan, who loved neither her husband nor the King, but who was harrassed by her creditors, was very conscious of her own value, and determined to be "recognised mistress," since this was now a position admitted and classified.

She was as "beautiful as the day," says Saint-Simon, without being "perfectly agreeable";—the correction is by Mme. de La Fayette. She had all the wit possible, was delicious in eccentricities and courtesies. In spite of so much brilliancy, the King rather avoided her and she was reduced to amusing Marie-Thérèse, who admitted her freely, having full confidence in her virtue. The Queen had been deceived by the pious austerities of the young Marquise, by her frequent communions, and by a mass of religious practices which were really actuated by a sincere sentiment, and which Mme. de Montespan preserved as far as she could, notwithstanding the scandals of her after life. Understood in this manner, a sense of duty towards religion did not prevent resorting to sorceresses. It rather led in this direction in giving to the

¹ *Archives de la Bastille*: Rapport de la Reynie, lieutenant-general of police, à Louvois (1680, no other date).

perverse soul "the vague consciousness of something beyond."¹

Mme. de Montespan became one of the best clients of La Voisin, regarding neither the expense nor the decency of the ceremonies, provided that the devil would make her the beloved of Louis XIV. Faring better than her rivals, she received the value of her money. She began her campaign in the course of the year 1666. The *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle, very full on this subject, and elsewhere confirmed, inform us that in the spring of 1667, Mme. de Montespan had supplanted La Valière; it was the young Queen alone who was ignorant of this fact.

Less than two years after, La Voisin had the imprudence to make a disturbance because two of her aids had not acted honestly toward her. One of these was a priest, called Mariette, attached to the Church of Saint Severin. La Voisin made use of him in sacrilegious practices. The other, Lesage, was a sort of Jack of all trades, who recoiled before no abomination. La Voisin accused them of having assaulted one of her clients, Mme. de Montespan, a fact true enough, but useless to proclaim from the housetops.

"The quarrel having made some noise," reports La Reynie, "and the King, having learned that these people were practising impieties and sacrileges, had them watched." Mariette and Lesage were arrested. The examinations have been pre-

¹ *La Magie dans l'Inde antique*, by Victor Henry.

served for us. Here is an essential passage : Mariette avowed without hesitation to having spoken the Gospels "over the heads of various persons," a form of conjuration relatively innocent. The names were demanded. "Over the heads of the Lady de Bougy, Mme. de Montespan, la Duvergèr, M. de Ravetot, all of which persons Lesage had led to him."¹

With this information secured, Louis XIV. ordered prosecution :

SAINT-GERMAIN, August 16, 1668.

I write this letter to tell you that it is my intention to have the said Mariette and Dubuisson² conducted from my château to the Châtelet of the City of Paris, for the continuation of their prosecution.

One may be sure that the King did not lose this inquest from view. Louis XIV. was most eager for police details and this affair touched him too nearly to be forgotten.

At the beginning of the investigation, it was discovered that Mariette was first cousin to the wife of the judge. On account of this connection, the Châtelet estimated that it was for the honour of the magistracy to stifle the affair. He brought every effort to accomplish this and evidently met with practical approbation from the powerful of

¹ Interrogatory of June 30, 1668. Mme. de Bougy was the widow of the Marquis of this name, lieutenant-general. La Duvergèr was occupied with magic. The Marquis de Ravetot had married Catherine de Grammont, daughter of the Marshal.

² Another name for Lesage.

this world, for history permits us to see numerous irregularities.

La Voisin, returning to her senses, heartily seconded the Justice in his efforts to obtain succour from those in high positions. Mariette and Lesage, after a period of trials and difficulties, were left in peace to occupy themselves with their ambiguous trade. Both of these men figured again in the monster process of 1680, in which they were among those who spread details concerning the abominable practices with which de Mme. de Montespan had been connected during long years. It does not matter here whether these details are additions to the truth or not, for it is only Louis XIV. who interests us, not Mme. de Montespan.

The letter cited above proves all that is necessary, that the King knew, from the year 1668, that his new mistress had connection with the criminal world, and that she had intimate interviews with ignoble persons, submitted to degrading contact, and had practised in their company sacrilegious rites. This monarch who passed for being so delicately keen in matters of punishment showed himself singularly little moved.

Surrounded by free-thinkers without prejudices, himself more or less of a free-thinker, he resembles so little, either morally or physically, the bewigged figure of the end of the reign, and of the *Mémoires* of Saint-Simon, that he appears as another individual. How easily both proprieties and punishments are put on one side when passion reigns,

but how much more alive, how much more of a natural human being, compared to the wooden figure of the portraits of Versailles, is the King as now seen ; Louis XIV. is decidedly an enigmatical quantity.

It would be inexact to state that passions had become more lively than they were during the wars of the Fronde, an epoch especially ardent ; but they had certainly changed their character, as had the tastes, ideas, literature, and fashions in general. This is the usual course of events, and, as we have seen, the movement was precipitated under the influence of a monarch all-powerful, determined to efface the past.

An artistic event which should not be overlooked had favoured the designs of Louis XIV., in opening unknown perspectives to the curious after new sensations, already numerous in the seventeenth century. Dramatic music made its entry into the modern world. It brought with it, according to the phrase of one of its historians, M. Romain Rolland,¹ an "unlimited power for expressing passion, and with passionate emotion all that remains incommunicable through the medium of language alone." We may or may not love music, but it must be admitted that a creation of this nature will certainly exercise a strong influence over the refined portion of a nation.

¹ *Histoire de l'Opera in Europe*, by M. Romain Rolland. Cf. *Histoire de la Musique dramatique en France*, by Chouquet, *Les Origines de l'Opera français*, by Nutter and Thoinan.

French society could not escape. The new art was in train to modify the nervous system, if I dare thus speak, of the world in which flourished, under the royal protection, those rather perilous ideas upon the rights of nature and the fatality of passion. Day by day, new chords were struck upon impressionable hearts. Dramatic music was born in Italy ; as might well be. In the year 1597, upon a carnival evening, a rich Florentine entertained a choice audience with a musical tragedy called *Dafné*, of which the score is lost. According to one of the guests, "the pleasure and astonishment which seized the soul of the auditors before so novel a spectacle could hardly be expressed."

M. Romain Rolland confirms this testimony : "It was like a thunderbolt. All felt themselves in the presence of a new art." In ten years Italian opera reached its full growth, thanks chiefly to a composer of genius, Monteverde, whose *Ariane* caused an audience of more than six thousand persons to burst into sobs on its first representation.

The art of singing had marched side by side with dramatic music and attained its height almost at once. A famous soprano, Vittori, threw the public into almost inconceivable transports. "Many persons were suddenly forced to loosen their garments in order to breathe, so suffocated were they with emotion."

Everywhere musical theatres were erected. The large cities built several ; Venice alone had five, and this number was not sufficient. The opera

was given in palaces and private salons ; “ Bologna possessed more than sixty private theatres, without mentioning the convents and colleges.” The clergy were caught in the whirlwind ; monks and nuns chanted operas, cardinals became stage managers of scenes, a future pope wrote librettos. It was an epidemic, a frenzy, and Italy did not go mad with impunity. In its beginning, the opera is responsible for grave disorders, both nervous and moral ; it became *too* much of a passion. Mazarin already possessed this taste before his establishment in France. He wished to initiate his adopted country into the joys, almost to be dreaded, which had so suddenly enriched human life, and he brought from Italy one after the other four Italian troupes, the first in 1645, the last a short time before his death.

The result was easy to predict. A spectacle patronised by the Cardinal became a matter of politics. Applauded by the partisans of the minister, derided by his adversaries, the Italian opera met with so strong an opposition that it was necessary to renounce it for the time, but the lesson was not lost.

French composers heretofore devoted to ballets and masquerades had not received unheedingly the revelation of the dramatic style ; their ambition was also aroused to express the tempests of the soul, and they began to grope along the new path.

The attempt was not at once successful ; but their efforts familiarised the public with the idea of a musical language of passion. In 1664, the song

was considered the natural interpreter of love. Molière fixes the date in his *Princesse d'Elide*, in which Moron does not succeed in gaining the ear of Philis because he speaks, instead of singing his declaration. Philis flees and Moron cries out: "Behold how it is: if I had been able to sing, I should have done better. Most women of to-day only let themselves be courted through the ears; this is the reason that the entire world has become musical, and one can succeed with the fair only by making them listen to little songs and verses. I must learn to sing like others."

It was indeed somewhat different in 1671, when French opera arrived on the scene.¹ It had hardly seen the light when it became, as a result of the association of Quinault with Lulli, a counsellor of voluptuousness.

While the decorations and the dances charmed the eyes, as the "machines" amused by their complications, the words and music, outdoing the *Princesse d'Elide*,² murmured unceasingly with the same caressing languor that no youthful beings have the right, for any motive whatever, to deny to themselves the duty of loving. "Yield, give yourselves up to transports," chants a chorus of *Amadis*. The thirteen "lyrical tragedies" given by Quinault and Lulli from 1673 to 1686 are all constructed

¹ The first opera worthy of the name was *Pomone*, by Cambert. It will be learned in special works how French opera differed from Italian and through what a chain of circumstances it occurred that a Florentine, Baptiste Lulli, was the true founder.

² See above.



JEAN BAPTISTE DE LULLI

After a contemporary print by Bonnart

upon this one theme. They gave expression to the one single idea; "Yield! surrender yourselves!" and resulted in producing a certain eloquence from their monotony. When these lyrics are played on the piano,¹ a better means of hearing them failing, one cannot but feel that in spite of their insipidity the continuous appeal to the senses might produce in the end, particularly in the atmosphere of a theatre, a strong effect.

Moralists recognised this. All will remember the violent attack of Boileau upon the opera. To-day we consider this attack as having been too narrowly virtuous, even a little ridiculous. It can be explained, however, in considering what a novelty it was to see people seized with nervous attacks and fits of weeping while listening to singing. Was it the "loose morals" of Quinault which caused these? Was it the new music? In either case, the worthy Boileau was excusable for his alarm.

France had not yet reached the point of excitability which existed in Italy. The French are not a sufficiently musical race for this; but in a less degree, the country submitted to the extraordinary power of the dramatic style. It is known through Mme. de Sévigné that if the French listeners did not invariably "burst into sobs" or "suffocate with emotion," more than one auditor, including herself, wept silently in hearing the fine passages.

¹ A selection of the operas of Lulli, for piano and voice, has appeared in the Collection Michaëlis.

Fashion also swayed affairs, and we know of what fashion is capable in France.

Saint Evremond has written a comedy entitled *The Operas*. In the list of *dramatis personæ*, one reads: "Mlle. Crisotine become mad through the hearing of operas. Tirsolet, a young man from Lyons, also became mad through operas." A third person relates that "nothing else is spoken of in Paris. Women and even young children knew the operas by heart, and there is hardly a house in which entire scenes are not sung." How nearly France and Italy are approached in this. The Louvre party caught the fashion, the courtiers, being eager to imitate the King, a great admirer of Lulli.

It had happened that Louis remarked during the rehearsals of *Alceste* "that if he were at Paris when the opera should be played, he would go every day." "This phrase," adds Mme. de Sévigné "is worth a hundred thousand francs to Baptiste."¹ This was no affectation on the part of the King; he really loved music, as can be recognised through unmistakable signs. Louis XIV. had throughout his life the taste and more than a taste for music; to which he added a longing to be himself a performer, a desire that can never be satisfied with the most skilled professional entertainments. As a youth, he played the guitar and took part in ensemble playing. As a man, he found that he had a good voice, and knew how to use it in amateur reunions.

¹ Letter dated December 1, 1673.

It can even be said that he sang not only at suitable but also at unsuitable moments: the day after the death of his son, the Grand Dauphin, the ladies of the Palace heard with surprise the King singing opera prologues. During his later years, when it was difficult to amuse him, Mme. de Maintenon organized musicales in her salon and Louis always enjoyed these. One evening when she substituted vespers¹ for the scores of Lulli, the King made no criticism and even intoned the vespers. Provided it was music, all kinds were good; but the King showed a certain predilection for the kind which he had seen created, already so rich in new emotions and which bore rare promise for the future of the artistic world, and the monarch possessed all the qualites needed to enjoy it profoundly.

The reader cannot fail to perceive through the witness of his frequent bursts of tears that Louis was of a nervous disposition, somewhat concealed under the cold and calm exterior which he had imposed upon himself. In advancing age, this tendency to tears became almost a malady. Mme. de Maintenon, in a letter dated 1705, writing to a friend of the "vapours" of the King and of his sombre humour, makes the remark that he is "sometimes overcome with weeping which he cannot restrain."

He was a sensualist to whom themes of love were always attractive. "Yield! Surrender!" the King

¹ *Introduction par M. le Comte d' Haussonville, aux Souvenirs sur Mme. de Maintenon.*

never ceased to repeat on his own behalf to the pretty women of his Court. For the rest, Quinault and Lulli made him choose the subjects for their operas; and Louis had therefore a responsibility for the voluptuousness which exhaled from their works.

Dramatic music has now established itself. The civilised world discovers with delight that this art has an unlimited capacity for expressing passion, and all the passions, even the highest, the purest, and this latter includes love. It has also been recognised that music can speak in its own words outside of the theatre, in a symphony, in a simple sonata, and that there exists no art so benevolent, so reposeful, and so reassuring to troubled souls. In spite of this, in spite of all, moralists have never been willing to throw down their weapons before music. Emanuel Kant was clearly hostile to it; he said, "It enervates man,"¹ and he turned away his disciples from its joys. Tolstoi has been unkind to it in the *Kreutzer Sonata*.

All forces can become dangerous; it depends on the "use made of them,"² and also upon the souls which receive the impulse; they must be of the calibre to support its force.

The action of music upon French society has never, so far as I know, been methodically studied in relation to its effects, both physical and moral. If a historian be found, he will issue from the psychological laboratories, scientifically equipped, in

¹ *Kant als Mensch*, by Erich Adickes.

² Romain Rolland.



BOILEAU

After the painting by H. Rigaud

which the observer conceals the physician : on this condition only can he speak with authority.

The Grande Mademoiselle cared but little for music. Nevertheless she extols Lulli in her *Mémoires* : "He makes the most beatific airs in the world." The glory of Baptiste touched her because he was "her own," arriving from Italy some time before the Fronde. "He came to France with my late uncle the Chevalier de Guise. I had prayed him to bring me an Italian, with whom I could speak and learn the language."

Lulli was only a boy of thirteen at the time that he was brought to France. Between the Italian lessons, he filled the office of cook. Later, admitted among the violins of Mademoiselle, it is related that he was chased away for having satirised his mistress in song. This recalls other events :

I was exiled: he did not wish to live in the country: he demanded leave to go away: I accorded it, and since he has made his fortune, for he is a great merry-andrew.

Lulli always remained a buffoon in the mind of Mademoiselle, although she assisted at his triumphs and survived him.

Mademoiselle preserved the taste for literature formed at Saint-Fargeau. Her name is associated with several incidents, great and small, of the literary history of the times. In 1669, when *Tartuffe* was definitely authorised, she wished to have it performed in her salon. This fact is noteworthy as the Church still forbade its representation. On

August 21, Mademoiselle gave a fête. When most of the guests had departed, "*Tartuffe*, the fashionable piece, was played before twenty women and numbers of men."¹ Did the end of the phrase contain a slight excuse—"which was the fashionable piece"? However this may be, Mademoiselle could boast to her confessor that she had been "economical" with Molière. The entertainment at the Luxembourg was paid for with three hundred francs given to the actors, the current price being for such a performance five hundred and fifty francs. Thus the virtuous homes evidenced their piety!

On another occasion, Mademoiselle had the honour, if the Abbé d'Olivet may be believed, of supplying Molière with an entire scene ready made: and what a scene! Among the *habitués* of the salon figured one of the victims of Boileau, the impudent Abbé Cotin, who not finding himself sufficiently *étrillé* (thrashed) had provoked new retaliations in gossiping about Molière.

One day he brought some verses of his own composition to the palace of the Luxembourg to read them to Mademoiselle. In the midst of her admiration another writer, supposed to be Ménage, entered. Mademoiselle committed the error of showing the verses of the Abbé and, without mentioning the name of the author, of defending the expressed opinions. The result was the scene between Vadius and Trissotin (at first named "Tri-

¹ *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle.

cotin" lest one should be deceived). It was only needful for Molière to give the touch of genius as in the sonnet to the Princess Uranie and in the verses upon the *Carosse Amarante*. In these two cases, it is well known that the lines are copied word for word from a volume written by the Abbé Cotin.¹

Many echoes of the grand literary battle of the century² still resounded in the Luxembourg. The success of the first tragedies of Racine irritated that portion of the public, always large, which has a horror of being disturbed in its habits of thought by importunate novelties. Such a disturbance is a punishment to many persons, whether the moving force comes from literature, science, or art. There are many examples of this fixed state of mind to be found in the past century: it will suffice to recall the struggles hardly yet quieted between Pasteur and Wagner.

Racine appeared on the scene as a revolutionary force. He and Molière, sustained by their friend Boileau, presented a dramatic art absolutely new, which was separated by a gulf from that of Corneille and for which nothing had prepared the way. Corneille's predecessors were Mairet, the du Ryers and many others: Racine stood alone. He was the first and the last to make tragedy realistic, with

¹ *Œuvres galantes en vers et en prose*, by M. Cotin.

² For this see *Les Ennemis de Racine*, by F. Deltour; *Les Époques du Théâtre français*, and *Les Études critiques sur l'Histoire de la Littérature française* by M. F. Brunetière; the memoirs and correspondence of the times; the collection of *Mercure galant*; *les préfaces de Racine*, etc.

the subject simple, the characters scrupulously true to nature, and the language often audaciously familiar.

Louis XIV. applauded. Racine and the King well comprehended each other. Heinrich Heine has given the reason for this in one of those phrases which throw light upon an entire period: "Racine is the first modern poet, as Louis XIV. was the first modern King."

The young Court applauded cordially with the King. It also belonged to the new régime; but for the old Court, for the survivors of the Hôtel Rambouillet, the tragedy of Racine was as shocking, as displeasing, as were the first realistic romances to the faithful adherents of romanticism, and for the same reasons. In spite of the difficulty so many have, of sympathising with the ideas of the one called a little disdainfully "the gentle Racine," "the elegant Racine," this writer appeared neither gentle nor elegant to three-fourths of the salon, to the "old Court" of the Grande Mademoiselle. The *Pyrrhus* seemed to them "brutal," the *Phédre*, a "madwoman" "the blackness" of Nero or Narcisse entirely beyond what should be permitted on the stage.

Not that the personages of Corneille or of his predecessors acted less wickedly, but their brutes and villains were nevertheless "heroes" and that made all the difference. The personages created by Racine were only "men," simple men, who used words "low and grovelling," bourgeois words,

expressions such as "Quoi qu'il en soit, que fais je, que dis-je !" ¹ and did not even realise the sense : more than three hundred improper terms have been counted in *Andromaque*. Racine would have fared better if his poetic methods had not been in some way a criticism upon the cleverness of Corneille. This was the real grievance, obliging the adorers of the old poet to condemn the insolent one.

Mme. de Sévigné, who could not always prevent herself, although "mad with Corneille," from admiring Racine, or from letting him perceive it, hastened to correct herself when this happened. She wrote to her daughter, "*Bajazet* is beautiful," and added six lines further on, as a person who has a reproach to make, "Believe me, nothing will approach (I do not say surpass) some divine passages of Corneille." Having thus regulated her conscience, she returned to *Bajazet* to avow that she had "wept more than twenty tears" (letter dated January 15, 1672), but her letter evidently left her with a slight feeling of discomfort. Two months later, she attenuated the praise of the new piece, to which she now accorded only "agreeable things," and declared Corneille to be another order of genius : "My daughter, let us take care not to compare Racine with him, let us well perceive the difference !"

Almost all of Mademoiselle's generation showed themselves as jealous as Mme. de Sévigné for the glory of Corneille. To the admiration inspired by

¹ Criticism by Boursault.

his genius is added the tender gratitude that we guard for works in which live again the ideals of our youth. It is our own thoughts, our fine dreams of early days, that we love in these productions.

The tragedy of Racine signified that the day of Corneille had passed; its success indicated the inroad of new ideas and pointed definitely to the fact that those faithful to the ancient worship had really been relegated to the position of old fogies. This is never an agreeable position when one feels still alive and with no very active realisation that old age is approaching. People of letters are the first to suffer from these revolutions of taste which leave surviving only works of the first rank while the rest are cast away into oblivion.

As we know, the *litterateurs* who frequented the salon of Mademoiselle were all enemies of Racine, half on account of loyalty to Corneille, half on their own behalf, through an instinct of self-preservation. Besides Ménage and the Abbé Cotin, whom we have lately encountered speaking frankly to each other, besides the amiable Segrais whose literary powers were too light to lead him far, there was the Abbé Boyer, whose tragedies Segrais desired to be pardoned, because he was a "sufficiently good academician," and that worthy old man De Chapelain, illustrious until the day upon which his verses went to press. There was some reason for accusing Mademoiselle of having been the "centre of the opposition to the new poetry."¹ To say this is,

¹ Deltour, *Les Ennemies de Racine*.

however, to exaggerate her rôle. We shall see later that she was far too occupied in living through her own tragedy to be actively interested in those being enacted upon the boards. Loaded with injuries and calumnies by the Vadius and the Trissotins, menaced with thrashings by the aristocratic protectors of these great men of the salon, Racine ran the risk of being crushed, and was saved only by the signal favour of the King. Neither he nor Molière would have accomplished their work if Louis XIV. had not sustained them against all critics. This is a service for which we should not limit our gratitude. The reflection upon this great debt arouses a tenderness towards a Prince with whom we are otherwise not always sympathetic.

It is possible that there was some politics in his attitude. The success of writers so new fell in well with his design of making a *tabula rasa* of the detested past: but after all the main reason for which protection was accorded was affection.

When Louis XIV. laughed "even till his sides ached"¹ over the *École des Femmes*, at which amusement the *dévots* and prudes were indignant, when he saved the *Plaideurs*, almost hissed in the Hôtel de Bourgogne, by "bursts of laughter, so great that the Court was astonished,"² there was no calculation: he was honestly amused, like any one else. It was also a true and frank admiration which caused him to dry his tears at *Iphigénie*, and to

¹ *Gazette de Loret*, January 13, 1663.

² *Mémoires sur la vie et les ouvrages de Jean Racine*, by Louis Racine.

order the repetition of *Mithridate*. He loved the "new" for two reasons : because he had good taste, and because the heroes of the later writers were of the kind needful for his generation. It has been seen how marvellously Molière and the King understood each other, and the mention of Racine recalls to us the profound phrase of Heine. Racine revealed himself in the *Andromaque* as the "first modern poet." Hermione and Oreste have only a distant relationship with the heroes of Corneille. They are already "those possessed by love, the great passionates with whom love becomes a malady, who love to the brink of crime, and even till death."

With these characters, it can be said that modern love, profound, tender, melancholy, impregnated with soul, and at the same time troubled by the obscure influences of the nervous life, makes its entrance into French literature. Oreste shows a sadness, a despair, a madness, which a century and a half later burst forth in love romances. Louis XIV. had not waited for Racine for his education in passion. When Marie Mancini fascinated him, he was one of the first examples of the modern type of those "possessed by love," and he had never forgotten this crisis ; in fact he never forgot anything. This episode in the life of the young King had been a good apprenticeship for the comprehending of the love of Oreste or of Phédre as the true love malady, as a fatality against which our single will is only a feeble weapon.

Around the King, Mme. Henriette, Mme. de

Montespan, all the young Court and some shrewd spirits of the old, with Condé at the head, rendered justice to the truth of the "anatomies of the heart," in the tragedy of Racine. Mademoiselle was incapable of this; she believed too firmly in the superhuman strength of the heroes of Corneille, with whom the will laughs at resistance, whether the opposition arises in the soul or in the exterior world, to admit the fatality of passion. Nevertheless, it was the Grande Mademoiselle herself who was going to demonstrate clearly to all France that it was impossible to escape fate, when this fate points to love. Here we meet the great misfortune of her life!

An atmosphere of passion, and an intimacy with people whose sole occupation was to render themselves attractive, was somewhat dangerous for an old maid, sensitive without realising it. Mademoiselle had the singular desire, which later cost her dearly, to make an ally of Mme. de Montespan and thus to form a part of the chosen society of the Court.

She sought the company of the mistress and received service from her. Mme. de Montespan was her interpreter with the King. In return Mademoiselle endeavoured to calm M. de Montespan who, for serious or for trivial reasons¹ "flew into passions," like a "madman" or "wild person," against Madame his wife. "He is my relative and I scolded

¹ See the volume by MM. Jean Lemoine and André Lichtenberger, *De La Vallière à Montespan*.

him," says the *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle. As a connoisseur, Mademoiselle hugely enjoyed the original wit of Mme. de Montespan. The pleasure found in returning the ball in conversation was the foundation of the intimacy.

With the growing idleness of the Court, pleasure in pure cleverness increased. The play of the mind was the sole resource against ennui. Wit, no matter at whose expense, became the enjoyment. The wise and prudent Mme. de Maintenon succumbed like Mademoiselle, when her turn came, to the irresistible charm of a conversation which "renders agreeable the most serious matters, and ennobles the most trivial."¹

During the sharpest quarrel between Mademoiselle and Mme. de Montespan, the enjoyment of the opponent's wit was so keen that they parted with pain. "Mme. de Montespan and I," wrote Mme. de Maintenon in 1681,² "have to-day taken a walk, holding each other's arms and laughing heartily; we are not more in accord for this." There can never be too much cleverness, but there is an inconvenience in there being nothing behind the wit, and this is one of the rocks towards which Louis XIV. was pushing the French nobility. He made it impossible for those pacing his antechambers to indulge in any intellectual effort other than that of seeking pretty phrases to amuse the listeners.

¹ *Souvenirs sur Mme. de Maintenon.*—*Les Cahiers de Mlle. d'Aumale*, with an *Introduction* by M. G. Hanotaux.

² May 27, to M. de Montchevreuil.

A gentleman of quality commences his day at eight in the morning standing in waiting before the door of the king. Salutes are given and returned. The elegants comb their locks, glancing out of the corner of their eyes at those entering. Molière permits us to be present at the "final assault" through verses but little known :

Grattez du peigne a la porte¹
De la chambre du Roi ;
Ou si, comme je prévoi,
La presse s'y trouve forte,
Montrez de loin votre chapeau,
Ou montez sur quelque chose
Pour faire voir votre museau,
Et criez sans aucune pause,
D'un ton rien moins que naturel ;
"Monsieur l'huissier, pour le marquis un tel"
Jetez-vous dans la foule, et tranchez du notable,
Coudoyez un chacun, point du tout quartier,
Pressez, poussez, faites le diable
Pour vous mettre le premier.²

M. le Marquis enters. The chamber is already crowded. He "gains ground step by step," succeeds in seeing the King put on his shoes, for Louis performs this act with his own royal hands, and thus passes the first hour. The exciting event is repeated in the evening when the King takes off his shoes. The Marquis had already, at one o'clock, witnessed the consumption of the royal soup, and two or three times in the course of the day had delighted his eyes with the sight of the King passing

¹ "*Frappez*" would have been misunderstood.

² *Remerciement au Roi* (1663).

to and fro on his way to mass or to take the fresh air.

During the intervals, the courtiers were charged with certain puerile occupations. The round of homages were made to the various members of the royal family and the prominent personages of the day, and there was gambling and other pleasures. The only relief for this complete idleness was to be found in an active campaign if there happened to be a war on hand. Let the courtier be admired for being able under such adverse circumstances to keep his wit awake and alert for attack and response, and also for the capacity of finding the military virtues when again called upon to exercise them.

Fortunately, the latter virtues were deeply ingrained in the breasts of the French gentlemen of this period, and it is not to their discredit if the other faculties, mental and physical, the exercise of which was plainly discouraged by the King, should have so fallen into disuse that their children suffered. The final descendants of four or five generations of those living this absurd life were the *émigrés* of the great Revolution, all heroes, almost all clever, or at least appearing so, and in general people of wit, but without character. This fact can hardly be too much emphasised: never has a monarch laboured with greater skill and method than Louis XIV. in the successful attempt to annihilate the nobility and to ruin its reputation. This is one of the most serious souvenirs of the wars of the Fronde.

It was with the women as with the men—the same subjection, the same emptiness of life, from which arose the weakness of Mademoiselle for Mme. de Montespan. The situation of recognised mistress “affects nothing”; Mademoiselle had never considered that the virtue of others concerned her. The novelty of the situation, the unexpected prerogatives accruing to the new position, and the habits resulting, gave rise to some of the most curious incidents of the reign, and also strengthened an intimacy which survived many shocks.

As soon as Louis XIV. formally established his mistresses at Court, it had been needful to frame new rules of etiquette. At first these rules were understood rather than formulated, but contemporary writers give evidence of their existence. It was the new regulations which gave scandal, rather than the fact of a weakness too common to all men of all times. The people had found the phrase suitable enough when it ran to gaze on “the three queens” in one carriage; Mlle. de La Vallière and Mme. de Montespan were publicly at the same time occupying the rank of secondary wives to the King. When the royal family made its solemn visits to any of its members who were mortally ill, these two ladies arrived after the King and Queen. Mademoiselle met them at the deathbed of Mme. Henriette; “Mme. de Montespan and La Vallière came.” She met them again over the cradle of a daughter of Louis XIV. and of Marie-Thérèse, who died as an infant. “I found her in the last extremity. . . .

We staid almost the entire night watching her die ; Mme. de Montespan and Mme. de La Vallière were also there." The latter escaped from such honours as often as she could. Mme. de Montespan liked them better, and added to them. She had placed herself upon the footing of the Queen in regard to ordinary visits, which she never returned. "Never," says Saint-Simon, "not even to Monsieur or Madame or to the Grande Mademoiselle, or to the Hôtel de Condè."

The same hauteur was displayed in the manner of receiving the princes and princesses of the blood, and this "exterior of Queen" followed her into the retreat ! All were accustomed to it.

"The habit of respect was preserved without murmur," says again Saint-Simon, who recalled Mme. de Montespan, disgraced and passing her time in penitence, nevertheless continuing to hold court in her convent,¹ with as royal an etiquette as at Saint-Germain or Versailles :

The back of her armchair was formed by the foot-piece of the bed, and there was no other chair in the room. Monsieur and the Grande Mademoiselle had always loved her, and often went to see her; for these, chairs were brought, and also for Madame la Princesse; but Mme. de Montespan did not dream of deranging herself for her own people nor for those they brought with them. . . . One can judge by this how she received "all the world."

The "all the world," which included some of the

¹ The Convent of Saint-Joseph, rue Saint Dominique ; Mme. de Montespan had constructed in it an apartment for herself.

most distinguished, contented themselves with small "chairs with backs," or simple camp stools. No one was offended, and "all France came"; I do not know by what fantasy it was considered a duty to make visits from time to time. She spoke to each like a queen holding her court, who honours in addressing." Marie-Thérèse herself, in the time in which Mme. de Montespan was the actual sovereign, had submitted to the long empire of custom. In 1675, the fourth year of the war in Holland, Louis XIV. being with the army while Mme. de Montespan was at her château at Clagny, one of their sons was "slightly ill."¹ The Queen considered it her duty to visit the child and to comfort the mother. She went to seek Mme. de Montespan, and led her one day to the Trianon, another to dine in some favourite convent, an example which brought the crowd to Clagny and made an end of hesitancy. "The wife of her firm (*solide*) friend," wrote Mme. de Sévigné, "visited her, and afterwards the entire family in turn. She takes precedence of all the Duchesses." (July 3, 1675.)

There had been a time in which this fashion of ignoring rank would have excited the indignation of Mademoiselle; but this time was far distant, farther than she herself realised. In 1667 she had cried very loud because her second sister, Mademoiselle d'Alençon, had made a *mésalliance* in marrying a simple seigneur, the Duc de Guise,

¹ The Comte de Vexin, who died young.—Mme. de Sévigné, letter dated June 14, 1675.

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and she had looked very gloomily at the pair. The time had passed for such pride, as the poor woman was herself ready for a worse *mésalliance*. Her patience was at an end. Her agitation while Louis XIV. was attempting marriage negotiations with the Duc de Savoie must not be forgotten. No prince had thought of her since this affront. She was considered too old. She would not confess this to be the case, but she felt it, and a tempest gathered in the depths of her heart. The storm burst in 1669. It is impossible to say in what measure nature alone was responsible, and what was due to the atmosphere of moral disorder and voluptuousness which Mademoiselle was now inhaling at the Court in the frequent companionship of the favourite. One thing is certain, the Grande Mademoiselle did not try to struggle against the passion which seized her ; her attitude was rather that of a person who sought its sway.

CHAPTER V

The Grande Mademoiselle in Love—Sketch of Lauzun and their Romance—
The Court on its Travels—Death of Madame—Announcement of the
Marriage of Mademoiselle—General Consternation—Louis XIV. Breaks
the Affair.

IN the spring of 1669, Louis XIV. one day was listening to the Comtesse de Soissons sing. She was the second of the Mazarin nieces, and the only really wicked one in the family. She sang a new song containing many naughty couplets, in which mud was thrown upon some of the courtiers. Men and women received their packet under the guise of mock praise, according to a fashion much in vogue. The phrase "mock praise" had become the name of a form of satire, which made an almost unique literature. The King permitted the couplets to pass in silence. He did not even protest at this one :

Et pour M. Le Grand,¹
Il est tout mystère;
Quand il est galant,
Il a comme La Vallière
L'esprit pénétrant.

¹ The Grande Equerry, Louis de Lorraine, Comte d' Armagnac.

The Countess then arrived at a couplet on Puyguilhem, better known under the name of Lauzun.¹

De la cour
La vertu la plus pure
Est en Péguilin. . . .

At this place the King interrupted: "If it is wished to vex him, they are wrong, but when people act as he has done, they must be let alone; as for others, they are badly treated." The sudden displeasure of the King at the mention of Puyguilhem caused a general silence, and the song stopped at this point.

The Grande Mademoiselle was present at this scene, and was surprised to discover that she was not indifferent to its import. Up to this time, she had scarcely known Lauzun, who did not belong to her coterie. "It pleased me," says her *Mémoires*, "to hear the manner in which the King spoke of him; I felt some instinct of the future." This was the first warning of the passion which had already insinuated itself into the depths of her heart; but she did not yet comprehend it. The idea came to her, however, of seizing an occasion to converse with Lauzun. She felt an inclination for this at once. "He has," said she, "a manner of explaining himself which is very extraordinary." Mademoiselle was interested, but she still believed that it was only the conversational capacity which

¹ The Marquis de Puyguilhem (written Péguilin) had taken the name of Comte de Lauzun the following January. The latter title will be used in this volume.

pleased her in the little cadet of Gascony. She began to query, however, why, having been sufficiently content during her five years of exile, she was now so willing to remain a fixture. The year had ended before she found a satisfactory response to this question : " I went in the month of December (the 6th) to Saint-Germain, from which I did not depart. I soon accustomed myself to it. Ordinarily, I only stayed three or four days, and my present long sojourn surprised every one."

On the 31st, she decided at length to return to Paris : " I was very bored there, and could not discover what I had done at Saint-Germain which had so much diverted me." She hastened to rejoin the Court, without knowing why, and commenced again her conversations with Lauzun, but still remained unconscious of any sentiment. She only knew that she was troubled and agitated, and discontented with her condition, and that she felt a desire to marry. The desire dated back a long time, but of late it had become so insistent that Mademoiselle was forced to examine herself seriously.

The passage in which she relates her discovery is charmingly natural and significantly true :

I reasoned with myself (for I did not speak to any one) and I said, 'this is no longer a vague thought ; it must have some object.' I did not discover who it was. I sought, I dreamed, but could not find out. Finally, after some days of anxiety, I perceived that it was M. de Lauzun whom I loved, who had glided into my heart. I thought him the most

worthy man in the world, the most agreeable ; nothing was lacking to make me happy but a husband like him, whom I should love and who would love me devotedly ; that heretofore I had never been loved ; that it was necessary once in life to taste the sweetness of being adored by some one, which would make worth while the sufferings caused by the pangs of love.

This explanation of her own heart was followed by days of intoxication. Mademoiselle lived in a dream, and all was easy, all was arranged : “ It appeared to me that I found more pleasure in seeing him and in talking to him than heretofore ; that the days in which he was absent, I was bored, and I believe that the same feeling came to him ; that he did not care to confess this, but the pains he took to come wherever he was likely to meet me made the fact clear.” In the absence of Lauzun, she sought solitude in order to think of him freely. “ I was delighted to be alone in my chamber ; I formed plans of what I could do for him which would give him a higher position.”

One single thought, characteristic of her generation, came to trouble her happiness ; she queried of herself if the great princesses of the theatre of Corneille would have married a cadet of Gascogne. Assuredly, passion blows where it listeth. Corneille had never denied this ; but he had maintained that the will should render us masters of our affections, and his plays bear witness that love, even when founded in a just feeling of admiration, can efface itself before the sentiment of the duty

owed to rank. Happily, poets, even when they are named Corneille, sometimes contradict themselves, and Mademoiselle, who had seen plays since the days of swaddling clothes, well knew her *répertoire*. She now recalled for her comfort a passage in the *Suite du Menteur* which clearly established the "predestination of marriage, and the foresight of God," so that it was a Christian duty to submit without resistance to sentiments sent to us "from the sky."

Although sure of her own memory, which was indeed excellent, Mademoiselle sent in great haste to Paris to secure a copy of the play, and found the page (Act IV.) in which Mélisse confides to Lise his love for Dorante :

Quand les ordres du ciel nous ont faits l'un pour l'autre,
Lise, c'est un accord bientôt fait que le notre.
Sa main entre les cœurs, par un secret pouvoir,
Sème l'intelligence avant que de se voir ;
Il prépare si bien l'amant et la maîtresse,
Que leur âme au seul nom s'émeut et s'intéresse.
On s'estime, on se cherche, on s'aime en un moment ;
Tout ce qu'on s'entredit persuade aisément ;
Et, sans s'inquiéter de mille peurs frivoles,
La foi semble courir au-devant des paroles.

How was it possible to doubt for a single instant after having read these verses that there is impiety in disobeying the "commands" to love which come to us from on high? Nevertheless, serious conflicts took place in the soul of the royal pupil of Corneille. Sometimes she represented to herself

with vivacity the joys of marriage, among the keenest of which would be the witnessing the vexation of her heirs, who were already beginning to find that she was making them wait too long, and whom she longed to disappoint. Sometimes her mind could only dwell upon the scandal which such a *mésalliance* would cause, the reprobation of some, and the laughter of others, and then her pride rose in arms. She thus on one day desired the marriage eagerly, while on the next she detested the thought of it, the vacillation depending upon the fact of her having between times seen or not seen M. de Lauzun.

This struggle between the head and the heart was prolonged during several weeks ;

finally, after having often passed and repassed the pro and con through my brain, my heart decided the affair, and it was in the Church of Recollects in which I took my final resolution. Never had I felt so much devotion in church, and those who regarded me perceived that I was much absorbed; I believe that God surprised me with His commands. The next day, which was the second of March, I was very gay.

If Mademoiselle had been of the age of Juliet, this would have been a pretty romance. But she was perhaps slightly too mature to play with the grand passion.

The man who was the cause of these agitations is one of the best-known figures of his times. Traces of him are found in all the contemporary writings. The singularity of his personality joined to the prodigies of his luck, good and bad, had

made him an object of interest to his contemporaries. It was of him that La Bruyère said: "No one can guess how he lives."¹ The political world, the ministers at the head, observed him with an anxious attention, because he had accomplished the miracle of becoming the favourite of the King, while possessing precisely the defects which Louis XIV. feared the most. Lauzun did not attain the position of such a favourite as the Constable de Luynes under Louis XIII., but he secured sufficient influence to accumulate offices and honours.

Antonin Nompar de Caumont, Marquis de Puyguilhem, later Comte de Lauzun, was born in 1633 (or 1632) of an ancient family of Périgord. His parents had nine children and nothing to give to the younger ones; but their birth assured to this youthful throng access to the Court and hope of aid from it. The third of the boys resembled Poucet in form and also possessed his keenness of mind. It was decided to send him to seek his fortune, not in the forest, as with the hero of the tale, but in the vicinity of the Court of France, the parents being convinced that with his acuteness he would not permit himself to be eaten by the ogre, but would rather succeed in devouring others.

The Maréchal de Gramont, first cousin of the old Lauzun, saw arrive at his mansion a very little man, with the face of "a flayed cat,"² surrounded with flaxen hair, who claimed to be fourteen years

¹ See the portrait of Straton in the chapter entitled "De la Cour."

² Saint-Simon, *Œuvres inédites*.

of age. This grotesque person was as lively as a sparrow and Gascon to the tips of his fingers.

The Marshal kept him and provided for his education. In winter the little man went to the "academy" to learn to dance, to shoot, and to ride. In the summer he campaigned with a cavalry regiment belonging to his uncle. There was apparently no plan for serious study of any kind, nor even any attention paid to making the youth read. Complete ignorance was still accepted among the nobility without remark; there had been little change for the better in this respect since the previous century. The parents of Lauzun had well judged. In a short time the boy had wormed himself into the most imposing mansions, the most sacred chambers. He was seen with the King, he was met in the company of beautiful ladies. The Court and the city became familiar with his furtive and impudent physiognomy, which soon grew haughty and insolent. At eighteen, his father gave him his first military charge. At twenty-four, he possessed a regiment; then suddenly, when the King came to power, he received advancements, favours, an always increasing and inexplicable credit, which aroused for him the hatred of Louvois, for in the frequent discussions in relation to the service, "the favourite always conquered." One of his tricks, which was unparalleled for impudence, and the discovery of which might well have crushed him for ever, ended in proving his strength.



Cliché Braun, Clément & Cie.

DUC DE LAUZUN

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At about the time when he attracted the attention of the Grande Mademoiselle, the insatiable little man extracted from his master (under the condition of secrecy for fear of Louvois) the promise of being shortly made Grand Master of Artillery. Lauzun was foolish enough not to be silent. Louvois, once warned, made such strong and convincing opposition that the King was aroused, and the favourite heard no more of the appointment. In his anxiety he appealed to Mme. de Montespan. She was his great friend and promised her aid; but he was distrustful and wished to "have his mind clear"; then occurred a scene which outraged Saint-Simon himself, as he related it long after. This writer avows in his *Mémoires* that it would have been incredible "if the truth had not been attested by all the Court."

Like most great workers, Louis XIV. was orderly and methodical in everything. He had fixed hours for his ministers and for appearing in public, hours for his wife and for his mistresses. It could always be known where he was and what he was doing. Mme. de Montespan's hour was in the afternoon. With the complicity of a chambermaid Lauzun was introduced into the room, concealed himself under the bed, and by keeping his ears open soon "cleared his mind." Mme. de Montespan did not forget him in her conversation, but he heard himself severely criticised and his bad character exploited; the slight dependence which could be placed upon him and his arrogance towards Louvois

were also emphasised. All these charges were made with so much wit that the King, carried away, replied with almost as little charity.

The listener under the bed, through rage and constraint, was thrown into a "great perspiration." Finally the King returned to his own affairs and Mme. de Montespan to hers, which were to attire themselves for a ballet. After her toilet, Madame found Lauzon at her door. He offered his hand and demanded if he dared flatter himself that she had remembered him with the King. She assured him that she had not failed to do so, and expatiated upon "all the services which she had just rendered him." M. de Lauzun permitted her to finish, only forcing her to walk slowly, and then softly in a low voice repeated, word for word, all that had passed between the King and herself, without leaving out a single phrase; and always retaining the sweet and gentle voice, he proceeded to call her the most infamous names, assured her that he would "spoil her face," and led her most unwillingly to the ballet, more dead than alive, and almost without consciousness.

The King and Mme. de Montespan both believed that it was only the devil himself who could have so accurately reported what had been said. Royalty and the mistress were in trouble, and in a "horrible rage"; they had not yet recovered their equanimity when the favourite recommenced his intrigues.

Three days after this apparently inexplicable

event, he came to break his sword before the King, declaiming that he would no longer serve a prince who forswore his word for a — (the word cannot be repeated). The conduct of Louis XIV. at this juncture has remained famous. He opened the window and threw out his cane, saying that he should regret having struck a gentleman.

The next day Lauzun found himself in the Bastille, and it might have been supposed for a long sojourn, under a monarch who never as a child had pardoned a lack of respect. The public was still more astonished to learn, at the end of the second month, that it was the King who sought pardon, and Lauzun who held his head high, refusing recompense and asserting that the prison was preferable to the Court.

The feelings of Louvois and others can be imagined during the strange interchange of visits between Saint-Germain and the Bastille, for the purpose of obtaining from this dangerous personage the acceptance of the much-desired charge of Captain of the Body Guard; also the alarm at the prompt¹ return of the favourite, more of a spoiled child than before the punishment.

Whence came this credit with a prince so little susceptible to influence, who had always pretended to be as opposed to the rule of favourites as of prime ministers? In what did this little Lauzun show special merit? and what attracted women who pursued and sought his favour through cajoleries

¹ Lauzun became Captain of the Body Guard in July, 1669.

and gifts? Little Poucet he still was; for he had not increased in stature. "He is," wrote Bussy-Rabutin, "one of the smallest men God has ever made."¹ He had not become more beautiful. We can on this point believe the testimony of Mademoiselle herself. However strong her passion, she is yet able to paint Lauzun in these terms, writing to Mme. de Noailles: "He is a small man. No one can say that his figure is not the straightest, prettiest, most agreeable. The limbs are fine; he has good presence in all that he does; but little hair, blond mixed with grey, ill-combed, and often somewhat greasy; fine blue eyes, but generally red; a shrewd air; a pretty countenance. His smile pleases. The end of his nose is pointed and red; something elevated in his physiognomy; very negligent in attire; when, however, it appeals to him to be careful, he looks very well. Behold the man!"

This is not an alluring picture. There was but little to attract. It was murmured that he possessed secret methods of making himself beloved. "As for his temper and manners," continues Mademoiselle, "I defy any one to understand them, to explain or to imitate them." The world was not entirely of this opinion. It could recognise at least that M. de Lauzun was "the most insolent little man born in the century,"² also the most malicious. Many cruel traits were ascribed to him, and his

¹ Letter to Mme. de Sévigné, dated February 2, 1669.

² *Mémoires et Réflexions* of the Marquis de la Fare.

fashion of turning on his heel and plunging into the crowd before his victims had regained their composure was well known.

The world was also well assured that the favourite was an intriguer. Lauzun was always occupied with some machination, even against those to whom he was indifferent ; this kept his hand in. For the rest, Mademoiselle was right ; he was *not* understood. He was very intelligent. His clever phrases were repeated. For example, his response to the wife of a minister who said rather foolishly, in emphasising the trouble her husband gave himself : " There is nothing more embarrassing than the position of the one who holds *la queue de la poêle*, is there ? " " Pardon, Madame, there are those who are within."

But Lauzun also loved to play the imbecile and to utter with the tone of a simpleton phrases without sense ; he indulged in this singular taste even before the King. The contrast was great between his pretensions to the " haughty air " and the desire to be imposing and the habit of adorning himself in grotesque costumes in order to see whether any one dared to laugh at M. de Lauzun. He was once found at home arrayed in a dressing gown and great wig, his mantle over the gown, a night-cap upon his wig, and a plumed hat above all. Thus attired, he walked up and down scanning his domestics, and woe to him who did not keep his countenance.

He was at once avaricious and lavish, ungrateful

and the reverse, delighting in evil but at the same time loyal as relative or friend while not ceasing to be dangerous. He undertook at one time to advance in the world his nephew, lately come from Périgord. He furnished him with a purse and took the trouble to present him at Court, at which their apparition was an event. They were pointed out to every one, and no one, not even the King, composed as he was by profession, could help laughing; Lauzun had indulged in the fantasy of dressing his nephew in the costume of his grandfather. The poor lad felt so ridiculous that he almost died from shame, and fled from Paris without daring to show himself again.

In this freak, his uncle had not acted maliciously: he had simply disregarded consequences. There was certainly a strain of madness in Lauzun. If not too large, a tinge of this kind often gives to people a certain fascination. It had captivated Mademoiselle, who in trying to define her attraction for Lauzun was forced to conclude, "Finally, he pleased me; and I love him passionately."

The King had also not been insensible to this indefinable charm, but it must be said that he had been slightly dazzled by the perfection of the qualities of a courtier which were shown by this half-madman. The Court of France possessed no more servile being bowing down before the master than "the most insolent little man seen during the century." This Gascon played comedies of devotion for the benefit of Louis XIV. and flattered him in

the most shameful manner, which succeeded only too well.

The King was persuaded that M. de Lauzun loved him alone, lived but for him, and had no thought apart, and the King was touched by this illusion. He found such absolute devotion delightful, and was ready to pardon much to the man who gave so good an example to other courtiers.

But even in giving full weight to the originality and the unscrupulousness of this man, which undoubtedly added to his force, and also bearing in mind that Louis XIV. did not entirely escape a certain terror which his favourite inspired, it is still difficult to account for a success so disproportioned to the merit. Lauzun had almost reached the heights when the mad strain became ascendant and ruined him. Once decided upon her desires, Mademoiselle became completely absorbed in finding the best means of satisfying these. The first steps appeared to be the most difficult. Considering her rank, the advances must be made by her, and it fell to the Grande Mademoiselle to demand the hand of M. de Lauzun. Everything had been prepared and the Princess did not anticipate a refusal. But it was not sufficient to be married; she wished to live her romance, to be loved, and to be told so, and this delight was not easy to attain. "I do not know," says she, "if he perceived what was in my heart. I was dying of desire to give him an opportunity to tell me what his feelings were to me. I knew not how to accomplish this."

Probably in all the Court there did not exist another woman so naïve as Mademoiselle in regard to the manipulation of a lover! After having seriously thought over the matter, she decided upon a classic expedient. She resolved to tell Lauzun that it was a question of an alliance, and that she wished to ask his advice. If he loved her, he would certainly betray himself. She entered upon the attempt, on the same second of March on which she had awakened so gaily, and met her lover in the palace of the Queen, at the time when that lady retired to her *oratoire* to "pray God."

While Marie-Thérèse was prolonging her devotions a certain freedom was permitted in the anteroom.

"I went to him and led him near a window. With his pride and his haughty air, he appeared to me the Emperor of all the world. I commenced: 'You have testified so much friendship for me during so long a time, that I have the utmost confidence in you, and I do not wish to act without your advice.'" Lauzun protested, as was fitting, his gratitude and his devotion, and Mademoiselle continued: "It is plainly to be seen that the King wishes to marry me to the Prince de Lorraine; have you heard this mentioned?" No, he had "heard nothing of it." Mademoiselle poured out some confused explanations as to her reasons for wishing to remain in France, in the hope of finding at length true happiness. "For myself," concluded she, "I cannot love what I do not esteem." Lau-

zun approved all and demanded: "Do you think of marrying?" She responded naïvely, "I become enraged when I hear people calculating upon my succession." "Ah," said he, "nothing would give me greater delight than to marry." At this moment, the Queen came out of the *oratoire* and it was necessary to part. Lauzun had betrayed nothing. Nevertheless, Mademoiselle felt very happy: "I thought, there is one important step taken, and he can no longer mistake my sentiments; on the first occasion, I will learn his. I was well content with myself and with what I had done."

Lauzun had in fact really comprehended that the Grande Mademoiselle was throwing herself at his head, and he was well pleased to enter into the game at all risks, in order to gain what he could. Without actually reaching the marriage ceremony, the love of a grand princess can be of advantage in many ways. He took pains, therefore, to renew the conversation, and employed all his art, all his wit, in default of feeling, in keeping the flame alight in the breast of the old maid and in flattering the weaknesses which united with the movements of her heart in increasing the desire for marriage. Mademoiselle could not support the vision of the heirs always on the watch; Lauzun accentuated and sympathised with her annoyance at overhearing such phrases as "This one will have that territory, another will inherit this land." "I find your vexation very reasonable," said he, "for one should live

as long as possible and not love those who desire our death."

Mademoiselle could not resign herself to growing old. This was not coquetry, of which she could not be accused; it was the conviction that on account of her high birth she was a privileged creature. She said very seriously, "People of my quality are always young," and she dressed as at twenty, and continued to dance.

Lauzun attacked this delicate subject and did not hesitate to speak unpleasant truths before offering the soothing balm held in reserve. It was his habit to treat women brutally in order to make them submissive, and in this case there were double reasons for doing so. "His maxim," relates Saint-Simon, "was that the Bourbons must be rudely treated and the rod must be held high over their heads, without which no empire could be preserved over them." This system had succeeded tolerably well with Louis XIV. Lauzun could well believe, in these early times, that it would also be successful with his cousin, so humbly did she accept his harshness.

He said to her: "I find that you are right to take a husband, nothing in the world being so ridiculous, no matter what may be the rank, as to see a woman of forty wrapped up in the pleasures of the world, like a girl of fifteen, who thinks of nothing else. At this age, a woman should be a nun or at least a *dévot*e, or she should remain at home modestly dressed."

He admitted that Mademoiselle, on account of her

high rank, might constitute an exception, and that she might be permitted at long intervals to hear one or two acts of the opera ; but her duty as old maid was “ to attend vespers, and to listen to sermons, to receive the benediction, to go to assemblies for the poor, and to the hospitals.” Or else to marry; this was the alternative which pointed his moral. “ For once married,” continued he, “ a woman can go anywhere at any age ; she dresses like others, to please her husband, and goes to amusements because he wishes his wife not to appear peculiar.”

Every word impressed itself on the mind of the loving Princess. When Saint-Simon, who was intimate with Lauzun, read the *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle, he found the account of this adventure so true and lively that he renounced the attempt to relate it himself. “ Whoever knew Lauzun will at once recognise him in all that Mademoiselle relates, and his voice can almost be heard.” Through a very natural contradiction, the Grande Mademoiselle, even at the height of her passion, preserved “ some regret that she would no longer be queen in foreign lands.” Lauzun tried to banish this regret. He represented to her that the trouble of playing at royalty

surpassed the pleasure. If you had been really Queen or Empress you would soon have been bored. . . . You can now dwell here all your life. . . . If you desire to marry you can raise a man to be the equal in grandeur and power to sovereigns. Above all, he will realise that you have taken

pleasure in bringing him to prominence; he will be deeply grateful. It would not be needful to describe the man who may possess so much honour; for in pleasing you and in being your choice, he must of necessity be an estimable being. He will lack nothing; but where is he?

This language, so clear in its import to the reader, did not entirely satisfy Mademoiselle. The poor Princess was ever expecting an avowal or caresses which never came. Lauzun acted the disinterested friend, the person who was entirely out of the running, and he detailed all the reasons which made an unequal marriage distasteful to him. Far from seeking her, he held himself at a respectful distance when he met her. "It was I," says she, "who sought him." His reserve and his reticence added fuel to the flames, and this diverted him, but for the moment he did not dare to promise himself anything more than greater credit at Court.

In the meantime, the Duchesse de Longueville¹ wished to establish the Count de Saint-Paul, the one of her sons who resembled "infinitely" La Rochefoucauld. In spite of the great difference in age—her son was only twenty—she thought of Mademoiselle, who remained by far the best match in the kingdom, and commenced overtures. These were eluded, but with a gentleness which astonished the social world. Mademoiselle had her reasons: "For myself, who had my own desires buried in my heart, it did not at all vex me that the report

¹ The sister of the Grand Condé. Upon her part in the Fronde, see *The Youth of La Grande Mademoiselle*.

should be spread that there was question of marrying me to M. de Longueville.¹ It occurred to me that this might in some measure accustom people to my future action."

For once, the diplomacy of Mademoiselle did not prove a failure, and her calculations were found to be justified. Some days later, when the affair was being discussed before Lauzun, one of his friends, who had perceived that the Princess was listening with pleasure, asked him why he did not try his fortune.² Others joined in the suggestion and all assured him that nothing was impossible for a man so advanced in the good graces of the King. Lauzun expressed himself shocked at the idea of an alliance with Mademoiselle; but on returning to his lodging, he ruminated the entire night upon this conversation, and from that time the thought did not appear to him so chimerical. It was necessary, however, to delay the assurance; the King led the Court into Flanders and gave the command of the escort to his favourite.

This was a political journey. Spain had been vanquished almost without resistance in the war of Dévolution³ (1667-1668). Louis XIV. deemed it

¹ M. de Saint-Paul began toward this time to bear the name of de Longueville.

² This conversation, which gives the key to the conduct of Lauzun, is reported in *Le Perroquet* or *Les amours de Mademoiselle*, an anonymous recital printed by M. Livet following the *Histoire amoureuse des Gaules* (Paris, Jannet, 1857); and in the *Histoire de Mademoiselle et du Comte de Losun* (Bibl. Saint-Geneviève MS. 3208), not always sources to be relied on, but to be trusted here.

³ War between relatives for the succession.

useful to display French royalty in all its pomp to the populations lately united with his kingdom, by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (May 2, 1668), and all prepared to make a fine figure in a spectacle whose strangeness finds nothing analogous in modern life.

In 1658, Loret the journalist had valued at about twelve hundred souls (the servitors were not included) the convoy formed by the Court at its departure for Lyons. This figure was certainly surpassed in 1670, when the royal family alone, more than complete, since it included Mme. de Montespan and Mlle. de La Vallière, took in their train a suite of several thousand persons, not counting the army of escorts.

This suite was composed of ladies and maids of honour, gentlemen, pages, domestics of all orders and of both sexes, footmen and valets of valets. The King even brought his nurse with him. On the other hand, the nobility were better disciplined than in the times of Mazarin and Anne of Austria, and no one had dared to remain behind. The departure was from Saint-Germain, April 28. Pellison wrote the next day to his friend Mlle. de Scudéry: "It is impossible to tell you how numerous the Court is; it is much larger than at Saint-Germain or Paris. Every one has followed."¹

The quantity of luggage gave to this crowd the appearance of a wandering nomadic tribe. All the personages of high rank took with them complete

¹ *Lettres historiques*. Pellison accompanied the Court as historiographer.

sets of furniture. Louis XIV. had on this journey "a chamber of crimson damask," for ordinary use, and another "very magnificent" where greater accommodation would be had. The bed of the last was "of green velvet embroidered with gold, immensely large, which could of itself fill several small rooms." There were also entire suites of needful furniture when the King lodged at his ease, and the same for the Queen, beautiful Gobelin tapestries and a quantity of silver plaques,¹ chandeliers of silver, and other pieces.

The commissary department carried a monster cooking apparatus and necessary utensils to supply, morning and evening, several large tables with food served on plated dishes. When all was unpacked, their Majesties were "almost as at the Tuileries."

Monsieur could not do without pretty things nor infinite variation of toilet; he was much encumbered on a journey. Mademoiselle, demanding little, had nevertheless her rank to maintain, and her "campaign chamber" was imposing. On one journey, she was obliged to lodge ten days in a peasant's hut where the ceilings were so low that it was necessary to increase the height of the room by digging out the ground which formed the floor, in order to erect the canopy of her bed. Those of the courtiers obliged, from their rank as chiefs of *Commandments*, to keep open table led with them a staff of domestics and enough material for an

¹ Plaques: pieces of embossed silver, at the lower part of which was placed a chandelier.

itinerant inn. Others wished to make themselves conspicuous by the fineness of their equipage. That of Lauzun had been much admired at his departure from Paris. "He passed through the St. Honoré," wrote Mademoiselle, who had come across him by chance; "he was very splendid and magnificent." The most modest carried at least a camp-bed, under pain of sleeping upon mother earth during the entire trip.

The train of chariots, carts, and horses, or mules with pack-saddles, which rolled along the route to Flanders in 1670, can be pictured; also the difficulty of uniting luggage and owner when the resting-places were scattered over an entire village or group of villages; the accidents of all sorts which happened to the caravan, on roads almost always in a frightful condition, and in traversing rivers often without bridges; the indifference of some, the impatience of others, and the universal disorder; the anguish of losing one's cooks if one were a Marie-Thérèse, the desolation of not finding the rouge and powder if one were Monsieur or some pretty woman! Surely those who preserved their equanimity through such trials and under excessive fatigue deserve praise.

Louis XIV. was a good traveller, arranged everything for himself, and expected others to do as much. He detested groans, timid women, and those to whom a bed was important. The Queen Marie-Thérèse began to grumble before actually stepping into her coach, and the fact that she was

in a placid frame of mind during a trip was spread far and wide as a piece of good news. The frugal suppers and the nights passed in a waggon, while awaiting the carriage which had missed the way, appeared to her frightful calamities. The bad condition of the roads made her weep, and she uttered loud cries in traversing fords. She was once found in tears, stopping the horses in the open plain and refusing to go on or to turn back. An intelligent interest in new surroundings did not give her compensation for her woes, for she possessed no curiosity. The conferences with which the King entertained the ladies along the route, upon military tactics and fortifications, mortally bored and wearied the poor Queen, and she did not know how to conceal her feelings.

To tell the truth, among all the women who pressed behind the King upon the ramparts of the cities or on the fortifications of old battle-fields, appearing to absorb his words and explanations, Mademoiselle was the only one who really listened with pleasure. Since the exploits during the Fronde, the Princess had always considered herself as belonging to the profession of arms.

Monsieur had one great resource in travelling. When he joined the King, he brought with him some choice bits of gossip which entertained the entire coach. In the evening, when the beds were being anxiously awaited, he started games, or ordered the King's violins and gave a dance. If no other place offered, the company would use a barn

for the impromptu ball. Monsieur, however, was much annoyed at any mishaps which might interfere with his toilet, and could never take accidents of this kind lightly.

The journey of 1670 was made more difficult by torrents of rain, and the one who was generally drenched was the Commander-in-chief of the troops, who was obliged to stand with uncovered head to receive the King's orders. Monsieur looked with a sort of indignation upon the piteous countenance of Lauzun, his hair uncurled and dripping, and once said : " Nothing would induce me to show myself in such a condition. He does not look at all well with his wet hair ; I have never seen a man so hideous." ¹

Mademoiselle was more indignant than Monsieur ; chiefly over the fact that any one could consider M. de Lauzun ugly " in any state," and that the King should gaily expose him to the risk of catching cold. " M. de Lauzun is always without a hat and has his head drenched. I said to the King, ' Sire, command him to cover his head ; he will be ill.' I said this so repeatedly that I was afraid my solicitude would be noticed."

Mademoiselle cared but little on her own account for the discomforts of the journey. No woman made fewer grimaces at a bad supper, or for being forced to make a bedchamber of her carriage, and sometimes to sleep upon a chair. She did not, however, enjoy the reputation of being a good

¹ *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle.

traveller, on account of the insurmountable terror which water inspired. During a ford, she cried out as loudly as the Queen ; the signs of the King's impatience could not restrain her ; "as soon as I see it," said she, of the water, "I no longer know what I am doing."

The rest of the party belonging to the caravan resigned themselves to the discomforts of camping through "the grace of God." It was realised that any expression of discontent caused the danger of incurring the royal displeasure, and discomfort was expected as a necessary accompaniment of a royal progress.

In 1667, the Court had passed one night at the Château of Mailly near Amiens. The Abbé de Montigny, Almoner of the Queen, wrote the next day to some friends, "Mailly, ladies, is a caravan-sary. There was such a crowd that Mme. de Montausier slept upon a heap of straw in a cupboard, the daughters of the Queen in a barn on some wheat, and your humble servant on a pile of charcoal."¹ In 1670 the account of the night of the 3d of May filled many letters. May 3d had been a painful day. The immense convoy had departed from Saint-Quentin for Landrecies at an early hour, during a beating rain, which had visibly increased the watercourses and swamps. Hour by hour the vehicles sank deeper in the mud and the roads were encumbered with horses and mules,

¹ *De La Vallière à Montespan*, by Jean Lemoine and André Lichtenberger.

dead or overcome, with carts sunk in the mire, and with overturned baggage. It was not long before the chariots met the same fate. The Maréchal de Bellefonte was forced to abandon his in a slough, and make the remainder of his way to the resting-place on foot, in the company of Benserade and two others. M. de Crussol¹ met the water above the doors of the carriage in traversing the Sambre, and M. de Bouligneux,² who followed him, was forced to unharness in the middle of the stream and to save himself on one of the horses. When it came to the Queen and Mademoiselle, it was in vain to promise to conduct them to another ford reported as "very safe." Their cries and agitation were such that the attempt was abandoned. They sought shelter in the single habitation on the bank. It was a poor hut composed of two connecting rooms with only the ground for floor; on entering, Mademoiselle sank up to the knees in a muddy hole. Landrecies was upon the other bank of the Sambre. The night fell and all were dying with hunger, for there had been no meal since Saint-Quentin. The King, very discontented, declared that no further attempt should be made to proceed and the night should be passed in the carriages. Mademoiselle remounted into hers, put on her nightcap and undressed. She could not, however, close her eyes; "for there was such a frightful noise." Some one said, "The King

¹ Emmanuel II, de Crussol, Duc d'Uzès. He married the daughter of the Duc de Montausier and of Julie d'Angennes.

² Probably the uncle by marriage of Bussy-Rabutin.

and Queen are going to sup." Mademoiselle ordered herself borne through the mud into the hut, and found the Queen very sulky. Marie-Thérèse had no bed and was lamenting, saying "that she would be ill if she did not sleep," and demanding what was the pleasure in such journeyings.

Louis XIV. added the last touch to her vexation in proposing that the entire royal family and some intimates should sleep in the largest of the two rooms, letting the other serve as a military headquarters for Lauzun. "Look," said the King, "they are bringing mattresses; Romecourt¹ has an entirely new bed upon which you can sleep." "What!" cried the Queen, "sleep all together in one room? that will be horrible!" "But," rejoined the King, "you'll be completely dressed. There can be no harm. I find none." Mademoiselle, chosen as arbitrator, found no impropriety, and the Queen yielded.

The city of Landrecies had provided their sovereigns with a "bouillon very thin," the distasteful appearance of which alarmed Marie-Thérèse. She refused it with disgust. When it was well understood that she would not touch it, the King and Mademoiselle, aided by Monsieur and Madame, devoured it in an instant; as soon as it was all gone, the Queen said, "I wanted some soup and you have eaten it all." Every one began to laugh, in spite of etiquette; when there appeared a large dish of chicken cutlets, also sent from Landrecies,

¹ Romecourt was Lieutenant of the King's Guards.

which was eaten with avidity, soothing the injured feelings of the Queen. "The dish contained," relates Mademoiselle, "meat so hard that it took all one's strength to pull a chicken apart."

When the company retired for the night, those not yet prepared arrayed themselves in nightcaps and dressing-gowns,¹ and French royalty for this memorable night must be represented in the apparel of Argan.

In the corner of the chimney, upon the bed of Romecourt, lay the Queen, turned so that she might see all that was passing. "You have only to keep open your curtain," suggested the King; "you will be able to see us all."

Near to the Queen, upon a mattress, lay Mme. de Bethune, the lady of honour, and Mme. de Thianges, sister of Mme. de Montespan, pressed together for lack of space. Monsieur and Madame, Louis XIV., and the Grande Mademoiselle, Mlle. de La Vallière, and Mme. de Montespan, a duchess and a maid of honour were crowded on the remaining mattresses, placed at right angles and proving a most troublesome obstruction to the officers going and coming on official business to the headquarters in the other room. Happily, the King at length ordered Lauzun to use a hole in the outer wall for his commands. The royal dormitory was at last left in peace, and the occupants could slumber.

¹ It is evident that these last were carried in the private carriages, ready for any accident.

At four in the morning, Louvois gave warning that a bridge had been built. Mademoiselle awakened the King and all got up. It was not a beautiful spectacle. Locks were hanging in disorder and countenances were wrinkled. Mademoiselle believed herself less disfigured than the others, because she felt very red, and she rejoiced, as she found it impossible to avoid the glance of Lauzun. The royal party mounted into their carriages and attended mass at Landrecies, after which these august personages went to bed and reposed a portion of the day.

The same evening Mademoiselle, only half aroused, was severely scolded by Lauzun for her ridiculous dread of the water. This was very sweet to her ; it being the first time he had taken such a liberty, and the most passionate women in the early days of love adore the masterful tone. The two saw each other less often than at Saint-Germain, but with more freedom. The chances of travel gave, from time to time, the opportunity for long tête-à-têtes, by which they profited ; she, to become more pressing, he, to make himself more keenly desired.

Lauzun said one day that he thought of retiring from the world. " I am having a vision of such beautiful and great hopes ; and if they are only delusions I shall die of grief."

" But," said Mademoiselle, " do you never think of marrying ?"

" The one thing of importance in marriage," replied he, " would be belief in the virtue of the lady,

for if there had been the slightest lapse I would have none of her ; even if it were a question of yourself, far above others as you are ! ”

He said this because there was a rumour that the King had the plan of marrying Mlle. de La Vallière to his favourite.

Mademoiselle cried out ingenuously : “ But you would wish me ; for I am good. ‘ Do not talk even delightful nonsense, when we are speaking seriously.’ But return then to me.”

This was precisely what he did not wish. He recollected all at once that the Venetian Ambassador was expecting him.

On another occasion, Mademoiselle said to him, in confessing the fact that she was “ entirely resolved to marry,” and that her choice was made : “ I intend to speak to the King, and to have the wedding in Flanders ; that will make less stir than at Paris.”

“ Ah, I beseech you not to do this ! ” cried Lauzun alarmed, for he did not consider the ground sufficiently prepared, “ I do not wish it ; . . . I am absolutely opposed to it.” Some days after, they were together looking through a window and exchanging impressions upon the persons of quality who were passing, “ their forms, their bearing, their appearance, their wit.” At length, Lauzun remarked, “ Judging by what I hear, none of these would suit you ? ” “ Assuredly not,” replied Mademoiselle, “ I wish that the person of my choice might go by, that I could point him out to you.”

As every one had now passed, she continued : " He must be sought, there is still some one else." After this, relates her *Mémoires*, " he smiled and we talked of something else."

They had arrived at the point of smiles and mutual intelligence. Nevertheless the Court returned to Saint-Germain (June 7th) without Mademoiselle having obtained the decisive word for which she was meekly begging. Lauzun opposed some barriers to every advance. Acting through prudence or calculation, he was to have cause to congratulate himself.

Fifteen days elapsed in *détours* and feigned flights. Mademoiselle was exasperated. Comprehending perfectly well that a Gascony cadet could not say bluntly, " Take me !" she still was so little capable of subterfuge that she found the " manners of M. de Lauzun towards her extraordinary." Lauzun was too subtle for one so simple. La Bruyère himself was going to renounce the hope of penetrating into his motives, and to avow it in the passage in which he paints him under the name of Straton : " A character equivocal, unintelligible ; an enigma ; a problem never solved."

Persuaded that her lover held back through respect, Mademoiselle resolved to attack affairs boldly. On June 20th, she went to enjoy the diversions of the fine season¹ at Versailles. Monsieur and Madame were at their château at Saint-Cloud. Mademoiselle followed the Court. Lauzun

¹ *Gazette de Renaudot.*

was absent, but he took pains from time to time to appear in the Queen's salon. One evening, when he had met Mademoiselle and when he was chaffing her on the subject of the Duc de Longueville, the Princess said to him vivaciously : " Assuredly I shall marry ; but it will not be with that person. I pray that I may speak with you to-morrow, for I am resolved to address the King and I desire that all should be finished before July 1st." He replied : " I am going to-morrow to Paris, and Sunday without fail I shall be here, and we will then talk over everything ; I begin also to desire to have all ended."

On Sunday (June 29th), towards evening, Lauzun had not yet arrived. Mademoiselle was notified that the Queen was awaiting her for the daily drive. She went out quickly, and ran across the Comte d'Ayen,¹ who had also an appearance of being in haste, and who said to her in passing, " Madame is dying ; I am seeking M. Vallot,² whom the King has commanded me to lead to her !" Below in her carriage the Queen related the tale of the glass of chicory water and the fact that Madame believed herself to be poisoned. All were astonished and exclaimed, " Ah, what a horror !" People looked at each other and did not know what to do. Marie-Thérèse descended from her carriage and was peacefully entering a boat on the grand canal,

¹ Captain of the Body Guard. Afterward, Duc de Noailles, and Marshal of France.

² First physician to the King.

when a gentleman arrived in haste ; Madame was in extremity and besought the Queen not to delay if she wished to see her alive. The château was speedily regained, where the confusion recommenced. The Queen demanded every instant : “ What shall I do ? What shall I do ? ” She could not decide to go herself, and she prevented Mademoiselle from departing without her. Finally, the King appeared. He took the Queen in his coach with Mademoiselle and the Comtesse de Soissons. Mlle. de La Vallière and Mme. de Montespan followed. It was eleven o'clock when the royal family descended at the gate of the Château Saint-Cloud.

The spectacle which awaited it has been described a hundred times. A poor little dishevelled figure, pathetic from suffering, and already drawn by the approach of the dying agony, lay upon the bed. The unfastened chemise permitted her emaciation to be seen, and she was so pale that if it had not been for her cries it might have been thought that the end had already come. We know through Mme. de La Fayette¹ that the first sentiments of the spectators had been those of pity, natural in such a case, and here doubled by the sight of the frightful sufferings and the gentleness of this young and charming being in the presence of death. The state of Madame had touched even her husband, so embittered against her by her frivolities, and only the sound of “ weeping was heard in the chamber.”

¹ *Histoire de Madame Henriette d'Angleterre.*

With the entrance of the sovereigns and their suite the aspect of the room was at once altered. Louis was indeed sincerely affected, Mademoiselle much moved, and many of the others felt "that they were losing with Madame all the joy, all the agreeableness, all the pleasures of the Court."¹ But egotism and intrigue marched on the heels of their Majesties. Even while weeping, each began to dream over the consequences of this death. Who would inherit the prestige of Madame? Whom would Monsieur marry? Would it be the Grande Mademoiselle? How would this affect the interests of each? The dying woman felt a sudden chill in the atmosphere. "She perceived with pain the tranquillity of every one," reports Mademoiselle, "and I have never seen any sight so pitiable as her state when she realised the real attitude of those surrounding her bed. The crowd kept on talking, moving about in the room, almost laughing."

Monsieur was only "astonished" at what was happening. Mademoiselle having urged him to send for a priest, he said, "Whom shall we call? Whose name will appear well in the *Gazette*?" This preoccupation truly reveals Monsieur.

After the departure of the King, who took away others in his train, the scene again changed. Monsieur had sent for Bossuet, who, in a letter to one of his brothers, has related details of these last hours. To judge from this letter, it appears that the presence of the priest at the bedside of

¹ Mme. de Sévigné to Bussy-Rabutin. Letter of July 6, 1670.

Madame turned all minds from terrestrial preoccupations and banished all thoughts except those impressed by the grandeur of death. Madame herself gave the example, proving with her last sigh that she felt she was accomplishing "the most important action of life."¹ "I found her fully conscious," said Bossuet, "speaking and acting without ostentation, without effort, without violence; but so well, so suitably, with so much courage and piety, that I was completely overcome." Thus God had the last word!

On returning to Versailles, the Queen quietly ate her supper. Mademoiselle perceived Lauzun among those present. "In rising from table, I said to him, 'This is very disconcerting.' He replied, 'Very, and I am afraid that it may spoil our plans.' I responded, 'Ah, no. No matter what may happen.'"

The poor woman could not sleep during the night: how rid herself of Monsieur, if the King should wish "the marriage"? At six in the morning, word came from Saint-Cloud that Madame was dead. "At this news," continues Mademoiselle, "the King resolved to take medicine," and Mademoiselle, arriving with the Queen, found him in a dressing-gown, weeping bitterly over the loss of Madame, and very tenderly pitying his own woe. He said to Mademoiselle: "Come, watch me take medicine; let us make no more fuss; better act as

¹ Mme. de Sévigné to Bussy-Rabutin (letter dated January 15, 1687), speaking of Condé's death.

I am doing." After his draught he retired, and the morning was passed in his bedchamber speaking of the dead.

In the afternoon, the King dressed and went to consult Mademoiselle, as the great authority in matters of Court etiquette, upon the proper arrangements for the funeral ceremony. After these details had been discussed, the King spoke the word she was expecting and dreading : " ' My cousin, here is a vacant place, will you fill it ? ' " I became pale as death, and said, ' You are the master, your wish is mine.' " He urged me to speak frankly. I said, ' I can say nothing about this.' " ' But have you any aversion to the idea ? ' " I was silent ; he went on, ' I will further the affair and report to you.' "

In the salons, the crowd of courtiers was busily engaged in remarrying Monsieur. The question was, " To whom ? " and every one looked at the Grande Mademoiselle. Lauzun bore the situation like a man of spirit, without troubling himself with useless regrets or feigning a loving despair which was very foreign to his nature. His manner was free, very gay, too easy to please Mademoiselle when he congratulated her and refused to listen to her protestations that " it would never be. " " The King said that he wished you would marry Monsieur ; it will be necessary to obey. " He besought her not to hesitate, and dilated on the joys of grandeur, and the happiness she might have with Monsieur. She responded, " I am more than fifteen, and I do not propose to accept a life fit only for children. "

Of all the honours attached to the rank of sister-in-law to the King, one alone appealed to her,—that she would then have a good place in the royal carriage, instead of being always on the basket seat, and she represented to Lauzun that the “good place would not long remain vacant.” It would be assigned to the children of the King as soon as they should be grown up. Once he added: “The past must be forgotten. I remember nothing of what you have told me; I have lately forgotten all.”

Another time, he showed that he was not ignorant of what he was losing. She had just repeated, “Ah, this shall never be!” “But yes,” rejoined Lauzun, “I shall be glad; for I prefer your grandeur to my own joy and fortune; I owe you too much to feel otherwise.” “He had never before admitted as much,” remarks Mademoiselle. After such delightful conversations, she shut herself up to weep. The idea of marrying Monsieur was odious to her, for other reasons besides the desires aroused by her passion.

Not that she suspected him of having poisoned his wife. Mademoiselle considered her cousin incapable of such a crime. But she could not bear the thought of the many favourites of Monsieur and of their power. One of these, M. de Beuvron,¹ had confirmed this repugnance by coming insolently and inopportunately to assure her of his protection and of that of the Chevalier de Lorraine. He

¹ Charles d'Harcourt, chevalier, afterward Comte de Beuvron, was one of those whom rumour accused of having contributed to the death of Madame.

frankly told her : " It will be more to our advantage to have you than a German princess without a sou, who would only be an expense, while you have so much that the allowance of Monsieur can be spent for his liberalities ; thus we shall come off better." This was not a clever address to a princess who sincerely loved money. The following displayed even less tact : " If we aid in making your marriage, you will be under obligation to us, and you will realise our power."

Mademoiselle heard all and recounted the conversation to the King. " He has spoken like a fool," said Louis with his shrewd common-sense. Mademoiselle could not resign herself to this alliance, and Lauzun trembled lest he should be held responsible. He came once again, to find the Princess with the Queen, and said to her :

I come very humbly to supplicate, that you will speak no more to me. I am most unhappy at displeasing Monsieur. He might believe that all the difficulties you are making come from me. Thus I shall no longer enjoy the honour of addressing you. Do not summon me, for I shall not respond. Do not write to me, nor address me in any way. I am in despair to be forced to act in this fashion ; but I must do so for love of you.

She equivocated, tried to retain him. He repeated to her his accustomed refrain that he must obey, and coldly took leave while she cried out : " Do not go away ! What, shall I speak to you no more ?" From that day Lauzun carefully avoided her. One day, when Mademoiselle requested him

to re-knot her muff ribbon, he replied "that he was not sufficiently adroit," and yielded to Mlle. de La Vallière. He even avoided glancing in her direction.

Louis XIV. had found his brother well convinced of the advantage of marrying many millions ; Monsieur only demanded delay, not wishing, with the rumours which were circulating, to appear too eager to replace the dead. Mademoiselle also on her side was endeavouring to hinder the progress of affairs. Success crowned the efforts of both, and the month of September was well advanced when the King said to his cousin in the presence of the Queen : " My brother has spoken to me ; he wishes in case you have no children that you should make his daughter your heir,¹ and he says he will be well content not to have any more offspring, provided he is assured that my daughter shall marry his son. I counselled him to desire children, because this could not be a certainty."

Monsieur was thirteen years younger than Mademoiselle, and the latter very well understood the significance of words. She began to laugh. " I have never heard persons on the brink of marriage say that they did not wish children, and I hardly know whether this is a courteous proposition. What does your Majesty think ?" The King also laughed. " My brother has said so many

¹ Monsieur had two daughters by his first marriage ; Marie-Louise d'Orléans, who married, in 1679, Charles II. of Spain, and Anne-Marie de Valois, married, in 1684, to Victor-Amédée II., Duc de Savoie.

ridiculous things on this subject that I have advised silence."

The joking continued in spite of the Queen, who cried out, "This is really disagreeable!" Finally, Mademoiselle concluded in a serious tone: "Although I am no longer young, I have not reached the age at which children are impossible. . . . Such suggestions are most disagreeable to me." The King also became serious, and warned his cousin that she could never expect from him the gift of any government or any appointment which would permit the exercise of power, but only precious stones and furniture and other playthings. This again was a lesson from the Fronde, and in his *Mémoires*¹ Louis confirms this same resolution. Mademoiselle thanked her cousin somewhat ironically for what he had done to render Monsieur desirable, and, realising by the questions of the King that some hints had reached his ears, she pictured in covered words the future of which she had had a glimpse. The Queen demanded her meaning, but the King remained silent. "I do hope," observed Mademoiselle in ending, "that I may be permitted to act as I wish and that the King will not force me against my desires." "No, surely," replied Louis, "I will leave you free and will never constrain any one"; he added an instant after, "Let us go to dinner," and they separated. Some weeks rolled by. The favourites of Monsieur were

¹ Cf. *Mémoires de Louis XIV.*, "for the year 1666." Edited by Charles Dreyss.

cold about an alliance which the temper of Mademoiselle might make somewhat difficult, and which might in the end prove *not* to their advantage.¹

Events moved quietly enough when the Princess one evening in October supplicated the King that there should be no more said of the project. Louis XIV. appeared to be indifferent. Monsieur was at first vexed and then dismissed the subject from his thoughts. Marie-Thérèse alone, interested neither in her brother-in-law nor in her cousin, "was in despair," relates Mademoiselle, "for she wishes that we should marry and have children." But no one paid much attention to the despair of Marie-Thérèse. Lauzun approved the course of Mademoiselle and ceased to avoid her. That was all. For an ambitious man, he was not a really clever schemer; he had too great a fear of being duped. He again assumed a sombre attitude and refused to hear the name of the one chosen by Mademoiselle. On a certain Thursday evening, when she had menaced him with the threat of breathing against the mirror and of writing the name of the man she loved, midnight sounded during this contest. "Nothing more can be said," observed Mademoiselle, "for it is already Friday." The next day, taking a sheet of paper, she wrote distinctly, "It is you," and sealed it. "That day I met him only on the way to supper. I said: 'I have the name in my pocket, but I do not wish to give it to you on Friday.' He responded: 'Give it

¹ Cf. *Segraisiana*.

to me ! I promise that I will put it under my pillow and that I will not open the paper until midnight has passed.' " She did not trust him, and it did not occur to him to sacrifice a race that had been arranged for the Saturday. " Ah, well, I will wait until Sunday," said Mademoiselle with inconceivable patience, and her only vengeance was to let herself be implored a little, before giving up the paper. The couple were alone in a corner of the fireplace, in the salon of the Queen. " I drew forth the leaf, upon which only a single word was written, which, however, told much ; I showed it to him, and then replaced it in my pocket, afterward in my muff. He urged me very strongly to give it to him, saying that his heart was beating rapidly. . . . Before yielding I said, ' You will reply on the same leaf.' " . . . In the evening she did not dare to raise her eyes ; he declared that she was mocking him, that " he was not sufficiently foolish to be deceived," and this was the theme of the letter which he remitted to her. At the same time, he thought of the prodigious elevation which he was beginning to realise was a possibility before him. He was at last aroused, and could not always refrain from responding seriously to Mademoiselle. She spoke of the happiness which awaited them, and of her plans to make him the greatest lord in the kingdom. He counselled her always to bow before fate, but one day he added : " In marrying, the temperament of those throwing their fates together should be known. I will disclose mine." He said that he pos-

sessed a nature bizarre and unsociable, being able to live only in the wake of the King; "thus I shall be a peculiar and not very diverting husband." Later, he amplified a little, affirming that he was cured of desire for women, and had no more ambition. "When a post was proposed to me I refused it. After all, do you really want me?"—"Yes; I wish you."—"Do you find nothing in my person which is disgusting?" This question was reasonable enough. Lauzun was decidedly "unclean"¹—but it roused the indignation of Mademoiselle: "When you say that you are afraid of not pleasing, you are simply mocking; you have pleased too easily in your life; but now about me, do you find anything unpleasant in my face? I believe that my only exterior fault is my teeth, which are not fine. That is a defect of my race, which fact bears its own compensations." "Assuredly" replied he, and she could not extract the expected compliment.

In the course of these events, the Court returned to the Louvre and the Tuileries, Mademoiselle to the Luxembourg. After much hesitation Lauzun consented that Mademoiselle should write a letter in which she should supplicate the King to forget all that he had said against mixed marriages, and permit her to be happy. The contemporaneous opinion was that Lauzun had made the first move. The Spanish *Chargé d'Affaires* wrote from Paris, December 21: "It is certain, as every one says, that he has arrived at this point with the authorisation and

¹ *Mémoires de l'Abbé de Choisy.*

permission of the King.”¹ The public voice, whose echo has been preserved for us by the novelists of the period, added that Mme. de Montespan had been mixed up in the affair, a version which two of her letters to Lauzun confirm,² and that she had obtained the consent of the King by saying: “Ah, Sire, let him alone. He has merit enough for this.”³

There was evidently some secret bond between the mistress and Lauzun which united them when any mischief was at hand. The King had responded to Mademoiselle without actually saying yes, or no; he confessed that her letter had astonished him and asked her to reflect again. He repeated the advice three days later, during a *tête-à-tête* which took place behind closed doors at two o'clock in the morning. “I neither counsel you nor forbid you; but I pray you to consider well.” He added that the affair was being discussed and that many people disliked M. de Lauzun. “Think over this fact and take your own measures.”

The couple profited by the warning. On Monday, December 15, 1670, in the afternoon, the Ducs de Montausier and de Crégny, the Maréchal d'Albret and the Marquis de Guîtres presented themselves before Louis XIV., and demanded the hand of the Grande Mademoiselle for M. de Lauzun, “as

¹ Don Miguel de Iturrieta to Don Diego de la Torre. *Archives de la Bastille*.

² *Mme. de Montespan et Louis XIV.*, by P. Clément.

³ *Histoire* etc. (Bibl. Sainte-Geneviève, MS. 3208). The same version is found with slight variations in *Le Perroquet*, etc.



MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

From the painting by Pietro Mignard in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence
(Photograph by Alinari)

deputies from the French nobility, who would consider it a great honour and grace if the King would permit a simple gentleman to marry a Princess of the blood.”¹ This proceeding was a plan of Lauzun’s. It succeeded with the King, and after he had been thanked in the name of the entire nobility of the kingdom, Mademoiselle, who was apparently listening to the reading of a sermon, behind the chair of the Queen, was notified that M. de Montausier was asking for her. The Duke reported the good reception which they had received and ended in these terms : “ Your affair is accomplished, but I counsel you not to let things lag ; if you follow my advice, you will marry this very night.”

“ I was convinced that he was right ” adds Mademoiselle, “ and I prayed him to give the same advice to M. de Lauzun if he should see him before I did.”

There is no clearer fact in history than the evidence of the consternation into which France was thrown by the news that the Duchesse de Montpensier, granddaughter of Henri IV., was to marry the Comte de Lauzun, “ a simple (qualified) gentleman.” To-day, an alliance of this kind, provided it does not concern the heir to the throne, is only a piece of society gossip, even in lands still profoundly loyal to monarchical sentiments. In the seventeenth century such an event touched so nearly the social hierarchy upon which all rested that Mademoiselle, in thus confusing social ranks,

¹ *Mémoires de la Fare.*

appeared to have failed seriously in her duty as Princess.

Louis, as King, had not considered it his duty to oppose. The criticism was more severe inasmuch as custom, encouraged by illustrious examples, offered to lovers separated by birth easy means for completing their private happiness, sustaining at the same time public decorum. "Marriages of conscience" had been invented for such cases; why not be content with this means of doing your duty and of satisfying at the same time conscience and passion? Paris sought a reply to this question, and the whole city was whispering and busying itself in a manner not easily to be forgotten.

Ten years later, when the trials of the "Corrupters" disturbed the community, some one wrote to Mme. de Sévigné that "the last two days have been as agitated as during the time when the news of the projected marriage between the Grande Mademoiselle and M. de Lauzun was announced. All were seeking news and, eager with curiosity, were running from one house to another to gather details."¹

The princes and princesses of the blood considered themselves insulted, and rebelled, a boldness so unexpected, on account of their habitual submission, that even Louis XIV. was somewhat moved. The timid Marie-Thérèse gave the example. Mademoiselle came to announce formally the proposed marriage. "I entirely disapprove,"

¹ Letter dated January 26, 1680.

said the Queen in a very sharp tone, "and the King will never sanction it." "He does approve it, Madame, that is settled." "You would do better never to marry, to keep your wealth for my son Anjou."¹ Anger gave the Queen courage to address the King, who was vexed, and the result was a scene, tears, a night of despair; but also nothing gained, and finally the Queen was forced into a public declaration that she would sign the contract.

Monsieur loudly protested. He heaped abuses on the "deputies of French nobility," reproached Mademoiselle in the presence of the King for being "without heart," and said that she was a person who should be "placed in an insane asylum,"² and also declared that he would *not* sign the contract. The gravest accusation made by Monsieur was a statement, repeated to all, that Mademoiselle had said that the King had himself counselled the marriage. In vain Mademoiselle asserted that she had said nothing of the kind; the charge made a great impression upon Louis, and he expressed his first regret over the affair. The Prince de Condé, sometimes taunted with having become, somewhat late in life, an accomplished courtier, remonstrated respectfully but firmly with the King.

The old Madame, forgotten in her corner of the Luxembourg, never really felt the wave of disgust

¹ Second son of Louis XIV. He died young.

² Cf. for this chapter, the *Mélanges* of Philibert Delamare (Bibl. Nationale, French MS. 23,251), the *Journal* of d'Ormesson, and generally the memoirs, correspondences, pamphlets, and songs of the period.

and protest, but she was sufficiently aroused from her apathy to sign a letter to the King, written in her name by M. Le Pelletier, President of the Department of Inquests. Outside the Court circle, Louis XIV. felt himself blamed by all classes of society. The nobles in general refused to ratify the "Mandate" that the deputies had given in their name. Without doubt, the honour of this marriage would be great: the permission given to a princess of the blood to marry so far beneath her rank, a most unexpected favour from a monarch who had worked so systematically to undermine the power of the aristocracy; but the larger portion of the French nobility was so much impressed with the danger of insulting royalty, and weakening the sentiment of the sanctity of the Heaven-sent rulers, that it joined in the criticism of the rest of the nation.

The Parliamentary world and the society of the higher middle class were equally outraged. It was plain that the marriage could be made only with the King's consent, and the giving of this was considered a "shame." The bourgeoisie showed an inconceivable irritation; Segrais heard Guilloire, Intendant of Mademoiselle, say to his mistress in an excited tone, knowing very well that he was risking his position, "You are derided and hated by all Europe." As to the common people, their attitude was touching. "They were," reports a witness,¹ "in a state of consternation." They grieved as if their Prince had deceived them.

¹ Philibert Delamare, *loc. cit.*

The enemies of Lauzun increased the discontent and endeavoured to gain time. Louvois was credited with having persuaded the Archbishop of Paris to forbid the bans. The minister felt himself directly menaced, and this was also the opinion of the political world, in which many believed that the projected marriage was a stroke directed "against M. de Louvois, an avowed enemy of M. de Lauzun,"¹ by Colbert and Mme. de Montespan.

While the tempest was gathering, the friends of the two lovers pressed them to hasten the end. "In the name of God," said Rochefort, Captain of the Guards, "Marry to-day rather than to-morrow!" Montausier "scolded" them for dallying. Mme. de Sévigné represented to Mademoiselle that they "were tempting God and the King."²

Nothing can be done for people who are walking in the clouds. Lauzun, "intoxicated with vanity,"³ believed himself already safe in port, sheltered from all trouble, with the King and Mme. de Montespan on his side. Mademoiselle, "dazzled by love," permitted herself to be guided. Her first desire had been to marry upon the evening of the deputation to the King, without saying anything about it, but Lauzun refused. "He was persuaded that Mme. de Montespan would not fail him, and that nothing could now turn the King against him, and considered everything secure, saying, "I

¹ *Journal* of Olivier d'Ormesson.

² Letter to Coulanges, December 31st. The letter announcing the marriage, too well known to quote, is dated the 15th.

³ *Mémoires de la Fare*.

distrust only you." To marry thus clandestinely would not satisfy his vanity. He wished that the deed should be done as "from crown to crown, openly and with all forms observed." He desired the chapel of the Tuileries, pomp, a crowd, rows of astonished and envious faces, "rich livery" that he had hastened to order for the occasion. In short, he longed for the moon and he did not succeed in seizing it.

Tuesday, December 16th, was passed in talking, in expressing astonishment, in paying compliments. A multitude came to the Luxembourg, among whom the Archbishop of Reims, brother of Louvois, who said to Mademoiselle: "Would you do me the injury of choosing any other than myself to perform the marriage ceremony?" Another had already solicited the honour, a proof that so far a rupture had not been thought of. Mademoiselle replied: "M. the Archbishop of Paris has said that he desired the office."

Wednesday, there was a fresh crowd, Louvois in person and all the ministers; but there was no longer the same cordiality, and Mademoiselle herself perceived the difference. "They made low bows, they conversed, but no longer about the affair." The evening of the same day, the Princess gave to Lauzun ("awaiting something better," said Mme. de Sévigné), the Comté of Eu, which represented the first peerage of France, assuring the first rank, the Principality of Dombes and the Duchy of Montpensier, of which last Lauzun assumed

the title and name. It was agreed that the ceremony should take place the next day at noon. On Thursday, the 18th, the contract was not yet prepared; the lawyers had delayed on purpose. Towards evening, Lauzun, who was losing his assurance, offered to break with Mademoiselle.

She was offended and tried once more to make him declare his love, but he responded, "I will say I love you only when we issue from church." There was no longer question of the Tuileries chapel, nor even of dazzling the Parisians, and Friday found a new delay, Mademoiselle having herself wavered.

After consideration, a rendezvous was arranged at Charenton, in the house of a friend, where the wedding was to be secretly solemnised the next evening at midnight, without even an archbishop. The Parisian offer began to inspire distrust: "The curé of the place would do well enough."

When all was settled, Mademoiselle amused herself with showing to her intimates the chamber that she had arranged for the future Duc de Montpensier. "It was magnificently furnished," relates the Abbé de Choisy. "'Do not you think,' said Mademoiselle to us, 'that a Gascony cadet will be sufficiently well lodged?'" Lauzun took leave early to pass the night in a "bath house," as was the custom before a wedding. Mademoiselle opposed this, because he was suffering from a bad cold. He had also "trouble with his eyes." I said to him, "Your eyes are very red." He replied, "Do

they make you ill?" I said, "No ; for they are in no way disgusting." It may be noticed that these illustrious lovers did not possess the light graces of conversation ; their phrases were singularly heavy. "These ladies are mocking us," pursued the Princess. "I do not know, however, what caused me to have a presentiment. I began to weep in seeing him depart ; he, too, was sad ; we were ridiculed. The ladies also departed, only Mme. de Nogent remaining."

This last was the sister of Lauzun, and Mademoiselle had, during the past months, been very intimate with her.

While time was thus being wasted at the Luxembourg, Louis submitted to the almost universal antagonism and withdrew his authorisation to the alliance. "The Queen and the princes of the blood redoubled their entreaties ; the Maréchal de Villeroy¹ threw himself upon his knees, with tears in his eyes ; the ministers and all those approaching the King expressed the voice of the people. At length God touched the King's heart."² God? No, but a creature of flesh ; Mme. de Montespan for the second time betrayed Lauzun.

La Fare affirms the statement that it was the counsel of Mme. de Maintenon (still only Mme. Scarron) painfully earning her bread in bringing up in obscurity the children of Mme. de Montespan

¹ Ancient Governor of the King, who had kept a strong affection for his pupil.

² Philibert Delamare, *loc. cit.*

and the King. Mme. Scarron had cleverness and prudence, and at that time was far from any thought of rivalry; the King could not suffer her. She said later that he had taken her for a "learned woman," only caring for "sublime things"¹; and Louis distrusted Philimantes. It was, therefore, as a disinterested friend that she "pointed out to Mme. de Montespan the tempest which she would draw down upon her head in sustaining Lauzun in this affair; that the royal family and the King himself would reproach her for the steps she had urged. Mme. Scarron succeeded so well that the one who urged the marriage was responsible for preventing it."²

Louis XIV. yielded to the urgency of Mme. de Montespan and sent to the Luxembourg for Mademoiselle. It was eight o'clock in the evening. Mademoiselle uttered a cry on hearing that the King commanded her presence. "I am in despair; my marriage is broken." On reaching the Tuileries, the Princess was led to the King by the back staircase, and quickly perceived that something was being concealed from her. In fact, Louis had hidden Condé behind a door, that he might listen and be witness to what passed.

The door was closed behind me. I found the King alone, moved and sad. "I am in despair at the thought of what I must tell you. I am told that the world is saying that I am

¹ Mme. de Maintenon, *Lettres historiques et édifiantes*; cf. *Mémoire de Mlle. d' Aumale*, published by M. le Comte d' Haussenville.

² The Abbé de Choisy relates the same scene, but attributes it to the Princesse de Carignan (Marie de Bourbon-Soissons, 1666-1692).

sacrificing you to make Lauzun's fortune; that this would injure me in foreign lands, and that I must not permit the affair to be consummated. You are right in complaining of me; beat me if you wish. I will bear the weight of any expression of anger in which you may indulge, and feel that I merit your indignation." "Ah!" cried I, "Sire, what do you tell me? What cruelty!"

She mingled protestations with reproaches, sobbed out her despair on her knees, and pleaded to know the fate of Lauzun. "Where is he, Sire, M. de Lauzun?" "Do not be troubled! No harm shall come to him."

True sorrow is always eloquent, and Louis XIV. let his own emotion be visible without shame:

He threw himself on his knees and embraced me. We wept together three quarters of an hour, his cheek pressed against mine, he weeping bitterly as I did: "Ah! why have you wasted time in reflection? why did you not hasten?"—"Alas, Sire! who could have distrusted your Majesty's word? You have never failed any one before, and you now begin with me and M. de Lauzun! I shall die, and be happy in dying. I had never loved any one before in all my life; I now love, and love passionately and in good faith, the most worthy man in your kingdom; my only joy and pleasure will be in his elevation. I hoped to pass the remainder of my days agreeably with him, and in honouring and loving you as warmly as my husband. You gave him to me; you now take him away; it is tearing out my heart."

Some one coughed behind the door. "To whom are you betraying me, Sire? Can it be M. le Prince?" Mademoiselle grew bitter, and the King wished to end the scene; but she continued to supplicate him: "What, Sire, will you not yield to

my tears?" He replied, raising his voice so that he might be heard, "Kings must satisfy the public"; and added, an instant after, "It is late; I can say no more nor differently, even if you remained longer." "He embraced me and conducted me to the door."

Such is the recital of Mademoiselle. Another account of the interview exists, dictated the same evening by Louis to his Minister of Foreign Affairs, as the following letter, written the next morning, testifies. Before the King had risen, M. de Lyonne wrote in haste to M. de Pomponne, the French Ambassador to Holland:

I am overwhelmed with business, and have no time for details, but I do not doubt that every letter from Paris has brought news of the projected marriage of the Grande Mademoiselle with Comte de Lauzun. I must now warn you that the King broke this off yesterday at eleven o'clock in the evening, so that few people could be aware of the fact before the departure of the post. I have already outlined a circular letter from his Majesty, to be sent to all the Foreign Ministers, to inform them of what has passed in regard to this affair during the past seven or eight days; but as the King does not wake before nine o'clock, and as the courier will by that time have departed, his Majesty will not be able to sign in time for the letters to be forwarded to-day, and you must be contented with the simple news, that the affair is ended. I pray you to send a copy of this note to M. le Chevalier de Terlon and to the Sieur Rousseau,¹ and to advise them that I have requested you so to do.

Before referring to the circular letter of His

¹ The French Chargé d'Affaires in Sweden and Germany, *Archives de la Bastille*.

Majesty upon the subject which caused the cries and tears of his poor cousin, it should be noted that it seemed perfectly natural, to judge by the documents of the times, to advise officially foreign powers of events with which they were actually but little concerned. In the opinion of the seventeenth century, the man was inseparable from the sovereign, and France was deeply impressed with the universal importance of Louis XIV. and by consequence of the obligations devolving upon him. "He must account to all Europe for his actions," says, in regard to the "Affair Lauzun," the "relation" already quoted.¹

It is also well to recollect, in order to understand the text of the letter, that one of the half-sisters of Mademoiselle had married the Duc de Guise, cadet of the House of Lorraine; an alliance hardly less unequal in the eyes of the French aristocracy than that of Lauzun with the Princess. This marriage had excited but little attention, there being a wide difference between the importance of the sisters. Referring to this event, the "Deputies of the nobility of France" had not failed to assert that the nobles of France and the officers of the Crown were quite equal to foreign princes, and in particular to the "Lorraines" in spite of their pretensions. With this explanation, the text of the long despatch addressed to the ambassadors is given. It begins in these terms :

As what has taken place during the past five or six days in

¹ Philibert Delamare, *loc. cit.*

regard to a plan formed by my cousin for marrying the Comte de Lauzun, one of the Captains of the Body Guard, will probably make a great noise everywhere, and as my conduct in the matter is liable to be interpreted malignantly, and to be blamed by those who may be incorrectly informed of the facts, I believe it a duty to instruct all my Foreign Ministers."

The King then explains in detail the affair, and this explanation exactly accords with the recital of Mademoiselle, save that Louis XIV. states that he was opposed to the marriage from the beginning, and only yielded because he was weary of the discussion, being constantly harassed by his cousin and the Deputies of the nobility : " She [Mademoiselle] continued . . . through notes and every other available means to press me urgently to give the consent she demanded of me, as this alone could, as she said, give the happiness and repose of her life." The Deputies had also represented to him

that after having consented to the marriage of my cousin de Guise, not only without making the least difficulty but with pleasure, I should resist this, so ardently desired by her sister, I should clearly show that I made a great distinction between the cadets of royal houses and the Officers of my Crown. Such a distinction Spain did not make, but on the other hand, gave precedence to its own Grantees over any foreign Princes, and it was impossible that the making of this difference in France should not greatly mortify the entire nobility of the kingdom. In conclusion, the urgency of these four persons was so strong, and their reasons so convincing, especially that emphasising the danger of insulting the French nobility, that I yielded, and gave consent to the marriage, shrugging my shoulders at the

folly of my cousin, and only saying that as she was forty-three, she might do as she pleased.

He continued, "From this moment it was considered that the affair was concluded." Then follow the details already known, preparations for the ceremony, the crowd at the Luxembourg; rumours "very injurious" that the King was responsible for the marriage, wishing to favour Lauzun; and finally, the resolve to break off the affair.

This is the single point on which Louis XIV. believed it to be his duty to restrict his confidences to the universe. He passes over in silence the supplications of Mme de Montespan and the fact of Condé being hidden behind the door:

I sent for my cousin. I declared to her, that I would not suffer her to cross the frontier for marriage, and that I could not consent that she should marry any Prince who was my subject,¹ but that she might choose among the (qualified) nobles of France, with the exception of Lauzun, and that I myself would conduct her to church.

It is superfluous to tell you with what grief she received this announcement, how she wept and sobbed. She threw herself upon her knees. "I had pierced her heart with a hundred dagger strokes; she wished to die"; I remained firm.

The King added that he made the same communication to Lauzun, "and I may say that he received it with all the self-control, submission, and resignation

¹ This exclusion probably refers to the Prince de Condé, with whom an alliance would have been considered a danger to the peace of France.

which I could desire.”¹ It is with the unfavourable comparison to Mademoiselle that this curious document terminates. Louis displayed but little generosity before a grief so deep.

The Princess regained her chamber in a pitiable state. She went into hysterics and broke the windows of the carriage. At the Luxembourg, the salon was filled with a curious crowd awaiting her return. “Two of her footmen entered into the room, saying in loud voices, ‘Depart at once, by degrees.’ Every one scattered immediately; but I remained the last, and saw Mademoiselle advance from the hall of the Guards like a dishevelled fury, menacing heaven and earth with extended arms.” She had barely time to regain a slight degree of calm, when Lauzun entered, accompanied by Messieurs de Montausier, Créqui, and Guitry. “On seeing him, I uttered loud cries, and he could hardly restrain himself from weeping.” The nobles of France came at the command of the King to thank the granddaughter of Henri IV. for the honour that she wished to confer upon them. M. de Montausier bore the address.

Mademoiselle sobbed. M. de Lauzun had, with full understanding, taken the expected attitude, of a man who blesses the most cruel blows coming from the hand of his King. “M. de Lauzun,” wrote Mme de Sévigné, “has played his rôle to perfection;

¹ *La Correspondance de Pomponne* (Bibl. de l’Arsenal, 4712, 1598, 11. F.), fol. 373. M. Chéruel in the appendix to volume iv. of *the Mémoires de Mademoiselle*, and M. Livet in *l’Histoire amoureuse des Gaules*, have published this letter after an inexact copy.

he has sustained his misfortune with firmness and courage, and has nevertheless displayed a grief, mingled with profound respect, which has won the admiration of all.”¹

The Princess would have been contented with something less admirable. She said to him : “ ‘ You show such strength of mind, that all will believe you to be indifferent to me. What do you say ? ’ and I sobbed with each word.” He responded very coolly : “ If you take my counsel, you will go to-morrow to dine at the Tuileries, and will thank the King for the honour that he has done you, in having prevented an action of which you would have repented all your life.” She led her lover aside and had the pleasure of seeing him weep. “ He could not speak, nor could I. I could only say : ‘ What ! I am never to see you more ? I shall certainly die.’ Then we turned around. . . . These gentlemen departed ; I went to bed ; I remained twenty-four hours almost without consciousness.” She forbade any one to be admitted. Her door was, however, opened on Friday morning for Mme. de Sévigné. Just twenty-four hours had elapsed since Mademoiselle had overflowed with joy before her friend and despised any warnings. “ I found her in bed² ; she redoubled her cries on seeing me ; called me, embraced me, and deluged me with her tears. She said : ‘ Alas ! do you remember what you said yesterday ? Ah ! what cruel

¹ Letter dated December 24, 1670.

² Letter dated December 31, —.

prudence!’ I wept through sympathy with her woe.” A little later the King was announced. “When he entered,” reports Mademoiselle, “I began to cry with all my strength; he embraced me and placed his cheek against mine. I said, ‘Your Majesty acts like monkeys who stifle their children embracing them.’” As he was promising all kinds of wonderful things to console her, among others “that he would do fine things for M. de Lauzun,” she had the presence of mind, in spite of her anguish, to demand if she might not see her friend again. The reply of the King should be remembered, as it brought serious results for his cousin. He said: “I do not forbid you to see him; . . . and assuredly you cannot take advice of a worthier man in regard to any of your affairs than Lauzun.” She hastened to confirm the permission. “It is my intention, Sire, and I am very happy that you desire that he should continue to be my best friend; but at least, Sire, you will not change as you did before? I cannot help reproaching you.”

The succeeding days she was obliged to reopen her doors, and the same crowd which had feigned to rejoice with her now pretended to pity her. It was necessary to see again the same faces, to submit to curious looks, glances filled with raillery, and to reply to *banal* remarks. There was much joking in Paris at her having received condolences in bed, after the fashion of widows. “I have heard in the salon of Mme. de Maintenon,” relates Mme.

de Caylus,¹ "that she cried out in her despair, 'He should be there beside me!'"

A grand Princess, to be dying of love and for a simple cadet from Gascogne, almost a country fellow; this was a novel spectacle, which so shocked all ideas of decorum that the public could not take to heart very seriously this slightly theatrical grief. It was pretended that Louis had said, "This is only a fantasy born in three days and which will pass as rapidly." True or false, the King wished to believe this, and the phrase received general approbation. It relieved the fashionable world from the duty of sympathising with the unfortunate, who was eating out her own heart, and visibly fading away.

"I grew thin, with hollow cheeks, as a person who neither eats nor sleeps, and I wept the minute that I was alone, or when I met any friends of M. de Lauzun and they talked of events which had any connection with him. I always desired to speak of him." The hope of a speedy death was her sole consolation, for no one, she was convinced had so deeply suffered. "My state was pitiable, and it must have been experienced to be appreciated, for such feelings cannot be expressed. It is necessary to know one's self, in order to judge, and no one can have felt a grief equal to mine; there is nothing which can compare with it." This is the universal language of disappointed lovers; but the expressive phrase below is not at the disposal of all

¹ *Souvenirs et Correspondance.*

souls. It is only applicable to moments in which the excess of grief renders it almost unconscious : "On account of feeling too much, I felt nothing."

The fifth day, etiquette exacted that she should find herself consoled. Her duties as Princess were recalled to her. "It was needful to go to Court, it was not well to pass eight days without seeing the King."

In vain she fought against such cruel exactions ; she was forced to make a spectacle of herself, still with "discomposed face, red and swollen eyes, with constant floods of tears, at proper or improper moments, with sharp cries at sight of Lauzun."

Lauzun opened his eyes wide upon her as upon a naughty child, and severely menaced her : "If you act in this manner, I will never be found again in the same room with you !" But she could not compose herself. One evening, at a great Court ball, she stopped in the middle of a dance and began to weep. The King rose and placed his hat before her face, leading her out of the room and explaining, "My cousin has vapours." The public did not pity her. It would have liked to celebrate her defeat. "All have praised the King for this action," wrote Olivier d'Ormesson.

Louis XIV. was again popular, a transient popularity which lasted only a few days. "It may be said that not only the Court, but the entire kingdom has rejoiced in the rupture of the proposed marriage."¹ The sentiment of approval was unani-

¹ Philibert Delamare, *loc. cit.*

mous. As to the Princess, who was guilty of asserting the right to "personal happiness," opinion judged her severely. The seventeenth century did not admit, as has been seen, that individual sentiments or the interests of the heart could predominate over the exactions of rank or society, and the age of the lovers and disparity of their appearance, she so tall, he almost a dwarf, aroused ridicule instead of sympathy. The Grande Mademoiselle was suddenly rewarded "with contempt," "for," says La Fare, "if this contemplated alliance appeared extraordinary as soon as the news was made public, it became ridiculous as soon as it was broken."

It is agreeable to meet among these people, who were right in the main, but who were malicious and uncharitable, one good Samaritan.

While Mme. de Sévigné wrote gaily, "All is finished,"¹ the tears of Mademoiselle inspired kind and courageous words from a person comparatively obscure, and who excused herself from corresponding because she did not have enough "wit." A letter, dated January 21, 1671, addressed to Bussy-Rabutin by Mme. de Scudéry, sister-in-law of the illustrious Madeleine, contains this paragraph :

I will say nothing of the affair of Mademoiselle. You are no doubt acquainted with all that has passed. I will only add that, if you realise what a great passion can be, in the heart of a pure woman like the Princess, you will not wonder, but will have sympathy. For myself, who know nothing of love through experience, I comprehend that Mademoiselle is

¹ Letter dated December 24, 1670.

much to be pitied; for she has become sleepless. During the day she is agitated and weeps, and in fact is leading the most miserable existence possible.¹

Bussy-Rabutin replied (A Chaseu, January 29, 1671):

I comprehend what passion means in a woman of the age and temperament of Mademoiselle, who has preserved her heart hitherto untouched, and I confess that this tale arouses my pity. Love seems to me a malady like the small-pox; the later it attacks the victim, the more severe the illness.

The writer had indeed well understood the characteristics of late love on only its displeasing side. But his attitude was, unfortunately, the one adopted by almost every one.

Regarded half-pityingly, but with an undercurrent of ridicule, the Grande Mademoiselle ceased to be interesting to the fickle French public. The fall from favour was very definite. The heroine of the Fronde was effaced in the eyes of contemporaries, and remained only a ridiculous old maid, whose woes amused the gallery.

¹ *Correspondance de Bussy-Rabutin*, published by Ludovic Lalanne.

CHAPTER VI

Was Mademoiselle secretly Married?—Imprisonment of Lauzun—Splendour and Decadence of France—*La Chambre Ardente*—Mademoiselle purchases Lauzun's Freedom—Their Embroilment—Death of the Grande Mademoiselle—Death of Lauzun—Conclusion.

MANY of the events remaining to be recorded are very obscure. If they had any importance, they would have figured in the collections of historic enigmas and problems waiting to be solved ; but they hardly merit the honour, as few of them have had any such influence over the destinies of France as had, for instance, the fact of the subjection of Anne of Austria to Mazarin. Nor do any possess the romantic attraction which attached to the legend of the "Man with the Iron Mask" before its explanation. Petty details, however, bring the French society of this period near to us, and the fact that events cannot always be interpreted makes them seem more like real life. It is only in romances that all is explained.

The most obscure of these smaller problems is the question of the marriage of Mademoiselle with the "little man," as she herself called him.

Contemporary opinion has been almost unanimous in its belief in this marriage. Neither date nor place nor names of the possible witnesses have ever

been satisfactorily established, as was done in the case of the union of Louis XIV. and Mme. de Maintenon. There is no written proof of the fact; Mademoiselle had the habit of burning her letters, and made no exception in favour of those from Lauzun. She states this fact with regret, in her *Mémoires*. We are thus reduced to moral proofs. It is true that these are strong in favour of the event having taken place; but they are not altogether unanswerable.

The belief that a secret bond had remained, after the official rupture, rested in the mind of most people interested. One of the correspondents¹ of Bussy-Rabutin wrote to him, February 17, 1671: "Mademoiselle sometimes still weeps when she reflects, but often she laughs and is at her ease. Her lover continues to see her and no one opposes it. I do not know what will happen." Three weeks later, Mme. de Scudéry made allusion to the same rumour (Paris, March 6, 1671): "Mademoiselle is always conversing with M. de Lauzun. Their conversations begin and end with tears. I assure you, however, that there will be no result." Bussy was among those who believed that it "would come to something." He replied on the 13th to Mme. de Scudéry: "I am convinced that the affair of Mademoiselle and Lauzun will have a happy issue, not in the manner they at first hoped, but in a more secret method to which the King will consent."

¹ M. du Honsett, Ancient Intendant of Finance. He had just purchased the office of Chancellor of Monsieur.

Would Mademoiselle accept this other way? Doubt is permissible. *Marriages of conscience*, if fashionable in the seventeenth century, created false situations, sometimes very humiliating ones, to a person not an absolute sovereign accountable to no one, and in a position to let the truth come out or not as it pleased him. For the rest of mortals, secret marriages must actually remain concealed, or there would result endless difficulties. On this account, the married pair could only meet through a happy chance, which is not agreeable, while it was also almost impossible to escape suspicious commentaries and the uncomfortable dependence upon the fidelity of servants. Segrais would never believe that Mademoiselle had married Lauzun, and one of the reasons given was "that she sent away Madelon, her chambermaid, and she would not have done this if Madelon had been able to gossip." Segrais might have added that his mistress had always severely criticised the equivocations arising from *marriages of conscience*.

But all was changed after the serious conversation between the King and Mademoiselle behind the closed doors. Mademoiselle encouraged Lauzun to assume airs of authority, and she was meekly submissive. "He regarded me with such a look that I no longer dared to weep, the power that he had over me retaining my tears. It is much wiser not to lose self-control!"

It was by his advice that she cleared her palace of all who had blamed their first plan. M. de Mon-

tausier and Mme. de Sévigné tried in vain to save Segrais, who "was their special friend." "She cannot be touched," wrote Mme. de Sévigné, "upon a subject which approaches to within nine hundred leagues of a certain cape."¹ It was Lauzun who designated the successor of Guillore, her Intendant, and who submitted the choice to the King. This might give rise to remark. Lauzun warned Mademoiselle of this danger. "It may be said in the world that I wish to rule you completely." She responded: "Please God that you should; that is what I profoundly desire." Mademoiselle had confirmed through new acts the lavish gifts assured by the contract, and the King rivalled his cousin in generosity. If the courtiers can be believed, Louis had promised Lauzun that he should lose nothing by *not* marrying Mademoiselle. In any case, he heaped favours upon him. The first gift was the government of Berri, with fifty thousand francs to pay his debts and the hope that Fortune would continue her benedictions. Louvois grew anxious and amassed shiploads of hatred against the favourite.

The winter passed in this manner. In the spring, the Court returned to Flanders. During a sojourn at Dunkerque so much was said of the intimacy of the "dwarf" with the Grande Mademoiselle, that the report reached the ears of the Princess: "The rumour is circulating that we were married before leaving Paris, and the *Gazette de Hollande* confirms this. Some one brought the paper to me; I

¹ Letter dated April 1, 1671.

showed it to Lauzun, who laughed." Two pages further on, another conversation proves that the news was at least premature; but the public had the right to be deceived, so tender and familiar was the intercourse between the couple.

There was a question in this same spring of a trip to Fontainebleau :

I said to M. de Lauzun, "Take care to wear a cap when you are in the forest; the evening dew is bad for the teeth, and further you are subject to weak eyes and to catching cold. The air of Fontainebleau makes the hair fall out." He replied: "I certainly must try to preserve my teeth. I also fear cold; but as for the red eyes with which you are constantly reproaching me, they are caused by wakefulness, with which I have been troubled for some time. As for my hair, I have too little left to take further pains about it."

She preached neatness to him. "If you are slovenly, it will be said that I have bad taste. For my sake, you must be careful." Lauzun only laughed. Indeed, she scolded him through jealousy, fearing that he was escaping from her influence and going she did not know where, and perceiving this, he cajoled her. "As soon as he saw that I wished to scold him, he had unequalled methods for putting me in a good humour." All this folly resembled a honeymoon, and the *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle for this same year include a passage which is almost a confession. "It is still said that we are married. We neither of us say anything, it being only our particular friends who

would dare to address us, and it is easy to laugh at them, only saying, 'The King knows all.' "

The conduct of Mademoiselle during the ten years following being a perpetual and striking confirmation of this half-confession, the fact of the secret marriage would seem to be assured, and the date would be placed between May and November, 1671, if it were not for a last quotation, to be given at its proper date, which again throws doubt upon the event.

Whatever the truth may be, it would appear that Mademoiselle had known how to reunite the broken fragments of her happiness ; but Lauzun, for a second time, lost everything. He had easily learned that he owed the rupture of the first plan to Mme. de Montespan, and had conceived so furious a hate against this false friend that he lost his head.

After a scene worthy of fishwives, in which he had called her names impossible to print, he would proceed to declaim against her in the salons, with the utmost violence, and sometimes at only a few steps from her ears. The courtiers marvelled at the excessive insolence on the one side and the curious patience on the other, for Mme. de Montespan endured these outrages without whispering a single protest. It was rumoured that she had once been his mistress, and that his power was derived from this fact.

It is to this enforced penitence of the all-powerful favourite that Mme. Scarron alluded when at a supper, the account of which is given by Mme. de

Sévigné¹: "she dilated upon the horrible agitations in a country very well known, the continual rage of the little Lauzun, and the black chagrin or the sad boredom of the ladies of Saint-Germain; and suggested that the most envied was perhaps not always exempt." Mme. Scarron had seen the "horrible agitations" very near, for it was she who had intervened against Lauzun; it was upon her representations that Mme. de Montespan had ended by saying to the King that "she did not believe that her life was safe as long as this man was free."²

Lauzun was arrested at Saint-Germain, in his chamber, the evening of November 25, 1671. The evening previous, Mademoiselle had departed for Paris declaring: "I do not know what is the matter; I am in such dreadful apprehension that I cannot remain here." She wept on the way. She very well knew the cause. One of her friends had been asked, "if M. de Lauzun had been arrested," and this query had worried her.

Delayed by chance or by precaution, the news of the arrest did not reach the Luxembourg until twenty-four hours later. Lauzun was already on the road to Pignerol. Before him hastened M. de Nallot, a man of confidence despatched by Louvois, who certainly felt a ferocious joy in the action, to bear the instructions of his master to the Sieur de Saint-Mars, governor of the prison of Pignerol,

¹ Letter dated January 13, 1672.

² *Mémoires de La Fare*. Cf. the *Mémoires de Choisy*, *Segraisiana*, etc.

and of those enclosed within its walls. Foucquet had been during seven years under the care of Saint-Mars, who had followed orders with such fidelity that Louvois did not doubt that he would be obeyed as blindly in any commands it might please him to give regarding Lauzun. The instructions gave orders to imprison him with one valet, and never to permit him to leave the fortress nor to have any communication with the outer world.

Saint-Mars thus responded :

PIGNEROL, December 9, 1671.

Monseigneur, M. de Nallot arrived here on the fifth instant, conveying the note of instructions you have been pleased to send me. . . . He will report to you my haste in preparing the apartment for M. de Lauzun ; he will tell you, Monseigneur, that I will lodge him in the two low vaulted chambers which are over those of M. Foucquet : these are the ones with the barred windows you yourself¹ examined. From the way in which I have arranged the place, I can respond with my life for the safety of the person of M. de Lauzun, and also the certainty of intercepting any news sent or received.

I engage upon my honour, Monseigneur, that as long as this gentleman is under my care you will hear no further word about him, it will be as if he already lay *in pace*.

The place prepared is so constructed that I can have holes made, through which I can spy into the apartment. I shall also know all that he does and says through the reports of a valet whom I will furnish as you have ordered ; I have found one with much trouble, because the clever ones do not wish to pass their life in prison. You order that mass shall be celebrated for M. de Lauzun only on fête days and Sundays

¹ Louvois had visited Pignerol the preceding year.

and I will scrupulously follow the letter of your instructions. . . . The Confessor of M. Foucquet will attend the new prisoner on Easter and at no other time, whatever may happen. My only desire is to carry out exactly the orders with which you have honoured me : I shall always endeavour to do this with zeal, passion, and fidelity, so I trust that you may be content with my small services.¹

All the officials of the citadel had written to Louvois after the arrival of his agent, so great an impression had been made. It was said that M. de Lauzun was a great criminal and a very dangerous one to necessitate such precautions. Each wished to show his special zeal. Louis XIV. was also well informed about the prison destined for his old favourite.

Louvois showed the King the plan he had received. The apartment consisted of two low vaulted rooms facing a deserted court, through which no one ever passed. The windows were darkened by iron bars and were covered with a sort of basket-work used in prisons, to prevent the occupant seeing or being seen. Noises from without, even those from the guards and the kitchen, did not penetrate into this remote place, the most "noiseless" of all the citadel, on account of the enormous thickness of the walls and of the vaulting. "Never," said one of the letters, "will M.

¹ The authorities quoted in this and the following chapter, upon the captivity of Lauzun, are in part unpublished and drawn from the Archives of the Minister of War, in part borrowed from the *Archives de la Bastille*, by M. Ravaisson. See also a collection of historic documents of 1829 : *Histoire de la Détention des Philosophes*, by J. Delort.

Foucquet know that he has a companion." The correspondents of Louvois unanimously insisted upon the necessity of preventing any risk of escape. A screen of iron was placed in the embrasure of the windows and a *vissante* inserted in the chimney to prevent M. de Lauzun and M. de Foucquet from communicating with each other.

When this new command left Saint-Germain, Lauzun was already locked up at Pignerol. He appeared very sad and depressed during the journey. His grief was changed into fury at sight of the dungeon which awaited him. Saint-Mars wrote to Louvois (December 22, 1671): "Monseigneur, my prisoner is in so profound a grief, that I can hardly describe it. He said to me that I had made him a lodging *sæcula sæculorum*." Lauzun declared that he would lose his reason, and his agitation seemed to point to this danger.

[December 30] I do not believe, Monseigneur, that I can send you any news of my prisoner's being more tranquil; he is in so profound a grief that he does nothing but sigh and beat the ground with his feet. He asked me once if I knew the cause of his detention; I replied that I never received any news of this sort lest I should be tempted to tell it.

Lauzun had well divined the cause of his arrest, but he had not been told. All explanation had been refused at Saint-Germain, and the condemning him to such a dungeon with the most rigorous secrecy, with no declared reason, seemed a crying

and tyrannical act of injustice. Saint-Mars began to fear a tragic ending.

[January 12, 1672] Monseigneur . . . he is overwhelmed with so extraordinary a grief that I fear he may lose his reason, or kill himself, which last he has threatened several times. . . . As I do not stop to listen to his ravings, he accuses me of having grown hard and pitiless through my long occupation as jailer; and repeats that he has never been judged and that his worst suffering is caused by the fact that he is ignorant of his crime.

He had never been judged! This was the refrain during ten long years! Foucquet, his neighbour, had judges, *independants* or not; he had known the cause of his accusation, and his defence had been heard. Lauzun was in his vault through the good pleasure of the King without having had a chance to justify himself, and this grievance caused his revolt.

When Mademoiselle was told of the arrest of Lauzun, she was so overcome that she was astonished "that she did not die." She remained in a most pitiable state until the next day. She was counselled not to delay an appeal to the King, and it was needful to form some plan. If there had been only herself to consider, Mademoiselle would have been ready to bid adieu to the world; but there was Lauzun, who was, according to the custom then legal, to be accused when he could not defend himself, and there was only herself to plead his cause with the King.

It was impossible to abandon her lover, and Ma-

demoiselle found strength to rise and to go to Saint-Germain. She only reached the King in the evening at supper. "He regarded me with a sad and embarrassed air. I looked at him with tears in my eyes, but said nothing ; I know what he said in returning after to the ladies¹ : ' My cousin has been very courteous, she has been silent.' He would have been imprudent to address me, as I was prepared to reply to all."

The Court of France was at that date very gay and animated. Monsieur had just remarried (November 16), with Elisabeth Charlotte de Bavière, Princess Palatine, famed for the originality of her mind and the freshness of her language. The King, who, without wit, had good taste, was charmed with his new sister-in-law, and was lavish with fêtes in her honour. At first, Mademoiselle considered it a duty to be present. She pathetically relates the history of an abominable evening during which she was obliged to appear to be enjoying the spectacle of a ballet, while her thoughts were far distant, following a coach surrounded by musketeers :

To think that he was absent; that it was bitterly cold and was snowing heavily, and that my dear one was on the open road on his way to prison; to picture his sufferings and his pitiable appearance made my heart ache. I believe that it would deceive those who should have been there with him to see me here, not realising the torture it gives me. My single consolation is that these constant sacrifices I am making for the King,

¹ Mme. de Montespan and Mlle. de La Vallière were designated briefly "*les Dames*."

may in the end arouse his pity for M. de Lauzun and renew his tenderness, for I am not able to persuade myself that he no longer loves him. I should be only too content if my sacrifices can accomplish any results. This is my motive for remaining near the Court since Lauzun's imprisonment, and forces me from a sense of duty to do many things which I should have avoided if I had only consulted my inclinations. With a heart pierced with tender grief, I should have so willingly remained at home in solitude rather than to drag myself through the gay scenes of the Court festivities."

After each effort, she allowed herself slight relaxation and retired to weep in some corner, then returning to the King with red and swollen eyes. "I am persuaded" wrote she, apropos of a trip with the Court, "that my presence has recalled the memory of M. de Lauzun; this is the reason why I wish to be always before the eyes of the King. . . . I cannot believe that he will not feel that my looks are ever supplicating him." Mademoiselle was very ingenious in her efforts to refer constantly to the absent one. If a grated window was passed she began to sigh and to pity those in prison. If there was a rumour that Lauzun was ill, she solicited by letter the softening of the régime. Louis never responded, but he did not show any displeasure. The enemies of the disgraced one endeavoured to detach the Princess from her lover. They knew her weakness; she was very jealous, and there might easily be occasion in regard to Lauzun, known as the greatest libertine of this licentious Court. At the moment of arrest his papers had been seized. There were

many letters ; locks of hair and other love tokens, carefully ticketed, and a sort of secret museum enclosing portraits that Louis XIV. ordered to be destroyed,—not promptly enough, however, as many persons enjoyed a glimpse of them, and were able to identify the originals.

The “caskets” of Lauzun were the great social scandal of the winter, and there were people enough to exploit the contents to Mademoiselle. They gained nothing for their pains ; she had the wisdom not to listen. They belonged to the past. The same kind friends endeavoured to open her eyes to the fact that she had been deceived in giving her heart to a man who only desired her millions. They said : “ He did not love you ; when he was promised wealth, appointments, he readily left you ; the day on which the King broke the marriage, Lauzun gambled all the evening with the greatest tranquillity ; he cares nothing about you.” Mademoiselle allows in her *Mémoires* that she began to be disturbed when she was forced to hear such statements from morning till night during a series of years. Her own remembrances only too well confirmed the truth. She had never received a word of tenderness from Lauzun, not even a truly gracious word. But misfortune is an invincible safeguard with generous souls. Mademoiselle relates that her heart “ fought against itself ” in favour of her lover, and the heart conquered, since each new year found her still devoted, still indefatigable in her efforts to obtain his release.

At the end of eight years there could be no more doubt. Contemporaries and those of the next generation have tried in vain to discover why Louis XIV. attached so serious an importance to preventing Lauzun from receiving news. Of what was he afraid? Was it essential for the safety of France to insist upon such minute precautions?

One day, fresh linen was to be forwarded to Lauzun from Saint-Germain. Louvois wrote to Saint-Mars (February 2, 1672): "Have this washed two or three times before giving it to him." Saint-Mars signified that he comprehended and replied (February 20):

I shall not fail to have the linen you are sending to Lauzun thoroughly wet after having every seam examined, any writing which may be upon the linen will thus vanish. Everything which is brought out of his room is put at once in a tub of water after being examined, and the laundress bringing it from the river dries it before the fire in the presence of my officers, who take turn at this duty, week by week. I also take the same precautions with the towels, napkins, etc.

Another time, an ancient servant of Lauzun was arrested near Pignerol, who, realising that he was a prisoner, killed himself, and letters were found on the body. Had there been any intercourse with the prisoner? This thought cast Louvois into an inconceivable agitation. He wished at every cost to clear up the affair, and he found time even during the war with Holland to write letter after letter to Pignerol to order that trace of accomplices should be sought.

Men, presumably companions of the dead, were arrested. Two of them, who had fled to Turin, were delivered up through diplomatic action. It was necessary to make them speak "through any means, no matter what"; the question as to whether M. de Lauzun had received news must be solved. The attendants at Pignerol were much perturbed. An officer wrote to Louvois to "conjure" him to denounce the suspected among the soldiers under his orders, that I may arrest them and attach them as villains." And if his two nephews, who were in the citadel, should be found to be the guilty ones he "would be their first executioner." Saint-Mars was humiliated and offended that he should be suspected of being hoodwinked. He became ferocious against the "miserable beings" who had drawn down upon him this insult, and he willingly put them to the torture; "for, to tell the truth," wrote he to Louvois, "I have only to find the smallest charge against a soldier or domestic, and I would hang him at once" (August 20). Some weeks later he summed up the result of the inquest in these terms (October 7): "I cannot swear that an attempt has not been made to communicate with Lauzun, but I can pledge my life in the assurance that the effort has not been successful."

Saint-Mars had another grief. Louvois recommended to him incessantly to make his prisoner talk and to report every word, even the most trivial, but Lauzun would not utter a syllable. "I do not know why," wrote Saint-Mars, naïvely, "but he

distrusts me, and hardly dares to speak to me" (February 10, 1672). On March 19: "He is always in a state of extraordinary distrust of me." Louvois insisted, and received discouraged letters. (March 30:) "When I make a visit, our conversation is so dry and difficult that we often pace the room a hundred times without interchanging a word." Saint-Mars in vain sought innocent topics. He tried to converse about the weather. M. de Lauzun interrupted him under the pretext that the state of the weather was a matter of indifference to him, since, from his dungeon, he could see "neither moon nor sun."

Saint-Mars inquired about his health. M. de Lauzun cut him short, in declaring that "his health was a matter of no consequence to any one, and that he was really only too well." Saint-Mars did not know what more to say. He became furious. Lauzun perceived this, and grew even more taciturn. It was a fair and even fight. At the end of a year, Saint-Mars had not advanced an inch.

[January 7, 1673] When I said good morning or good evening, and when I asked him how he felt, he made low bows, saying that he was well enough to offer his most humble respects; after having thanked him, we walked some time together without speaking to each other, and, as I wished to retire, I asked him if he had anything to demand. He made again a very low bow and conducted me to the door of the room; this is the point at which we have arrived, and I am afraid that we shall make no further progress.

Saint-Mars tried to force the situation. It was

he who furnished the prisoner with everything; who gave him clothes, furniture, bought his eyeglasses, or ordered a wig. He thought that a method of making him speak would be to give him nothing that he did not demand. Lauzun invented a mute language.

Saint-Mars would perceive, in entering, some wornout or broken object placed in a conspicuous position, having the air of saying something. "Sometimes," wrote the governor of the citadel, "I feign not to notice, and in order to oblige me to speak, Lauzun will direct his steps so as to pass the object again and again until I am forced to comprehend." (May 6, 1672.)

The valet was almost as close as his master. Saint-Mars did not cease to lament the trouble which "these people" gave him. Prisoners' valets shared the fate of their masters. Once confined, they passed the sill of the prison only with the culprit; that is to say, in many cases never, which fact rendered it extremely difficult to procure servants. The one with Lauzun was a "wicked rascal" who had been bribed, but who at the end of three months refused to do his duty as spy.

Saint-Mars was indignant (February 20, 1672): "With your permission, I will put him [the valet] in a place that I reserve, which makes the dumb speak after a month's sojourn. I shall learn all from him, and I am certain that he will not forget the least trifle." Upon reflection, however, Saint-Mars ended by being patient. How was he to

replace the fellow? "No one of the valets attached to the citadel would enter this dungeon if I paid him millions. They have noticed that those whom I have placed with M. Foucquet never come out." Louvois never knew, in spite of earnest desire, what thoughts the fallen favourite was conceiving in his prison.

There was a slight recompense, however, on the days on which Lauzun fell into a rage, which often happened. The prisoner could not digest the fact that his questions remained unanswered. This might be reasonable enough if he asked if France were at war, or if Mademoiselle were married; but why refuse news of his own affairs? Why conceal from him the fact of his mother being alive or dead? His vexation became rage. He poured out a torrent of imprecations and bitter complaints, and Louvois had the pleasure of hearing by the next mail that silence did not indicate absence of suffering.

One day (January 28, 1673), after giving an account of one of these explosions, Saint-Mars added: "He said all this, weeping hot tears and crying that he detested his miserable life; he complained loudly of the horrible dungeon which I have given him, where he has lost his sight and his health." The wails of grief echoed even through Paris, leaking out from the cabinet of Louvois and the chamber of Mme. de Montespan, and the public demanded with curiosity what Lauzun had done to deserve a punishment so rigorous. "I can never

believe," wrote Mademoiselle, "that it is by the orders of the King." It was easily guessed that Louvois was avenging his frights and Mme. de Montespan her humiliations ; but why did the King permit such severity ? for Louis had never appeared to take very much to heart the entanglements of these two Court powers with his favourite.

It is needful to recollect that the seventeenth century had no greater respect for human liberty than for human life. Only rank and birth were of value, and these were honoured in a greater degree than it is possible now to comprehend. This same Louvois, who was tormenting Lauzun almost to the point of insanity, had hastened to send him a silver-service, and had asked him to complain if his guards were impolite.

"M. de Saint-Mars," wrote the Minister, "has orders never to fail in according the respect due to your birth and to the position which you have held at Court" (December 12, 1672). From like considerations, the birth of Lauzun had brought him new furniture, but not a single object of any kind which could aid him in inventing occupation or employment.

This was the real punishment : a complete inaction with not a single echo from the outer world which might prevent his mind from continually turning inward upon itself. Lauzun only obtained a few books at long intervals, and always with great difficulty, after every page had been examined in detail ; messages written in invisible ink were

feared, and phrases which might throw light upon the events of the day. When the choice of literature was left to Saint-Mars, he confined himself to *Le Tableau de la Pénitence* or the *Pedagogue chrétien*. The contents of these were well known and, also, "they might be useful to lighten his despair."

It will be remembered that Mademoiselle had scolded the "little man" to make him take greater care of his person and toilet. In prison, Lauzun had grown very careless. (April 20, 1672 :) "He grows so negligent that for three weeks he has worn a handkerchief knotted around his neck in place of a cravat." From note of July 30, 1672, more than seven months after his arrival : "He has not had his room swept, nor his glass rinsed ; he is extremely negligent." Lauzun had permitted his beard to grow, which contributed to his neglected appearance. Saint-Mars declared that it was a half-yard long. (February 11, 1673 :) "He is as disorderly at his meals as in his person and in his apartment."

Years passed. In 1673, they pruned the trees which cut off the light. This was the only change. In 1674, the prisoner almost died. His health was shattered and his temper changed. He became tranquil, except for an occasional access of anger, and was very polite to his jailer, who attributed this metamorphosis to the effects of the books of piety and the holy water freely supplied. Saint-Mars found him "very often" on his knees,

saying his prayers before an image of the Virgin, and had much joy in the change.

In 1676, in the month of February, Louvois received a letter,¹ the contents of which passed through Paris like a flash of lightning. M. de Lauzun had almost succeeded in effecting his escape; and neither by door nor window, the ordinary method in romances. He had made a hole in the dungeon of Pignerol by scratching with old knives, pieces of kitchen utensils, etc., and had succeeded in piercing the thick vault below his chamber. Lauzun rolled through this opening, and found himself between four walls, before a barred window. He began again to scrape; he demolished one of the corners of the window, unfastened one of the bars, and saw that he was several fathoms above the ground. His foresight had caused him to collect a quantity of napkins, from which he made a rope ladder; "the best made in the world," wrote Mademoiselle, with admiration for the sample sent to Louvois.

He descended by this ladder to the moat surrounding the fortress, "pierced the wall on the side of the moat,"² encountered a rock, and recommenced at a short distance from the place of the first attempt; the new passage led into a court of the citadel. Lauzun reached the ground one morning at daybreak. He had passed three days in scraping; it was this occupation which had kept him tranquil. Only an open door, and he would have

¹ This letter has been lost or destroyed.

² Louvois to Saint-Mars, March 2, 1676.

been saved. He would well have deserved success as a reward for his industry and patience. But all was firmly closed, and he was stopped by an incorruptible sentinel.

The poor prisoner was brought back to his dungeon, and Louvois stormed at the authorities of Pignerol, who permitted walls and windows to be demolished without perceiving that anything strange was occurring. Repairs and numerous new measures of precaution were ordered, and Saint-Mars, very much abashed, swore by all the gods that such a thing should never again happen.

In spite of these oaths, many of the prisoners succeeded in gaining access to their neighbours, according to the account of Saint-Simon.¹ It seems that the open chimneys of ancient times had become an ordinary means of communication between the dungeons of Pignerol. "A hole was made in the pipe, which was carefully closed during the day," and with mutual aid the prisoners ascended and descended. Lauzun was placed in relation with various prisoners, of whom one was Fouquet, who believed him to be mad when listening to his account of the failure of the plan of marriage with the Grande Mademoiselle. These gentlemen must have resembled chimney sweeps.

Saint-Mars, however, only knew of these practices after the death of Fouquet ; the troubles of Lauzun

¹ The letter from Saint-Mars (March 23, 1680) giving an account of the communications between the dungeons has never been found, any more than that telling of the flight of Lauzun.

were then at an end. The death of the eldest brother, which occurred in 1677, had brought new conditions. Lauzun became head of the family. His sister, Mme. de Nogent, represented to the King that it was needful for the preservation of the "House" that M. de Lauzun should be permitted to put his affairs in order, and she had no difficulty in obtaining a hearing. Although the individual counted for little, the "House" was a thing sacred, even in the eyes of Louis XIV. Saint-Mars was ordered to receive Mme. de Nogent, another of the brothers, Chevalier de Lauzun, and their advocate, M. Isarn, and to permit them to meet with his prisoner, exacting the promise that only business should be discussed. He forbade a single word, "under any pretext whatever," of Mlle. de Montpensier. An account of these interviews, sketched by Isarn, remains. It must not be forgotten in reading this document that Lauzun had a great interest in inspiring a lively pity in the hearts of these people who were returning to Paris. After long preliminaries, Isarn arrived for the first interview with Lauzun, whom no one had seen for six years.

[October 29, 1667] Two o'clock having come, M. de Saint-Mars, after sending away all the attendants, asked M. Isarn to enter his room where six chairs were arranged around a table, and M. de Saint-Mars retiring, returned after a moment leading M. le Comte de Lauzun, supporting him by the arm, for the Comte could hardly sustain himself, it may be on account of the open air, the bright light, or the weakness caused by his illness.

At this sight, I confess, Monsieur, that we were moved with pity, for we remarked his haggard face and the extreme pallor of the countenance, as much as could be seen under the long beard and moustaches, the eyes subdued with sadness and languor, so that it would be impossible not to be moved with compassion. I can hardly express the grief of Madame his sister and Monsieur his brother. A chair near the fire was given to him, facing the window, but he shrank back, saying in a low voice, and coughing, that the bright light made his eyes and head burn. M. de Saint-Mars turned his prisoner away from the window, placing himself on one side and M. the Commissioner on the other. I was at the side of M. de Saint-Mars, having my papers before me on the table. Mme. de Nogent could not restrain her tears, and we remained some time without speaking.

When they were all somewhat composed, Isarn entered into a summary of the affairs to be regulated. At the first pause, Lauzun interrupted. "He said coldly, that having been kept for six years and a portion of a seventh in a very restricted prison, and not having heard any business details for so long a time, and having met no one, his mind had become so 'sealed,' and his intelligence so clouded, that it was impossible for him to comprehend anything I was saying." He added affectionate words for his sister, touching sentiments upon his grief at having displeased the King, and, as if overcome by the remembrance of his much-loved master, he carried his handkerchief to his eyes, "where it remained a long time."

This spectacle provoked such an outburst of tears and groans that it was impossible to continue the conference. Lauzun "withdrew with Saint-

Mars without speaking." The sister was carried away in a dead faint. The Chevalier de Lauzun, ill with emotion, retired for the night, and Isarn shared in the general affliction. At the following sessions, Lauzun repeated that he comprehended nothing that his advocate said, but he gave him at the same time some instructions, "with much judgment and clearness." Touching scenes followed. One day, after having obtained permission, the prisoner asked if his mother were living, and there was, in this case, no need of pretence to make the scene impressive. At the last interview, he charged his sister to implore the pity of the King and the pardon of Louvois, in humble and submissive terms, which showed a man conquered, crushed, and henceforth inoffensive.

It may be through compassion, it may be, as was hinted, through some new and mysterious combination, that this appeal produced a relaxation in the prison discipline, which ended in a half-freedom. Lauzun was permitted to give dinners, to buy saddle horses, "to ride in the court and on the bastions."¹ At length arrived a detachment of musketeers, charged to conduct him to the baths of Bourbon, under pretext that he was suffering with one of his arms.

He quitted Pignerol April 22, 1681. Fouquet had died March 23, 1680. This left to Saint-Mars only a single man of note; the Man with the Iron Mask had been in the fortress some time at this date.

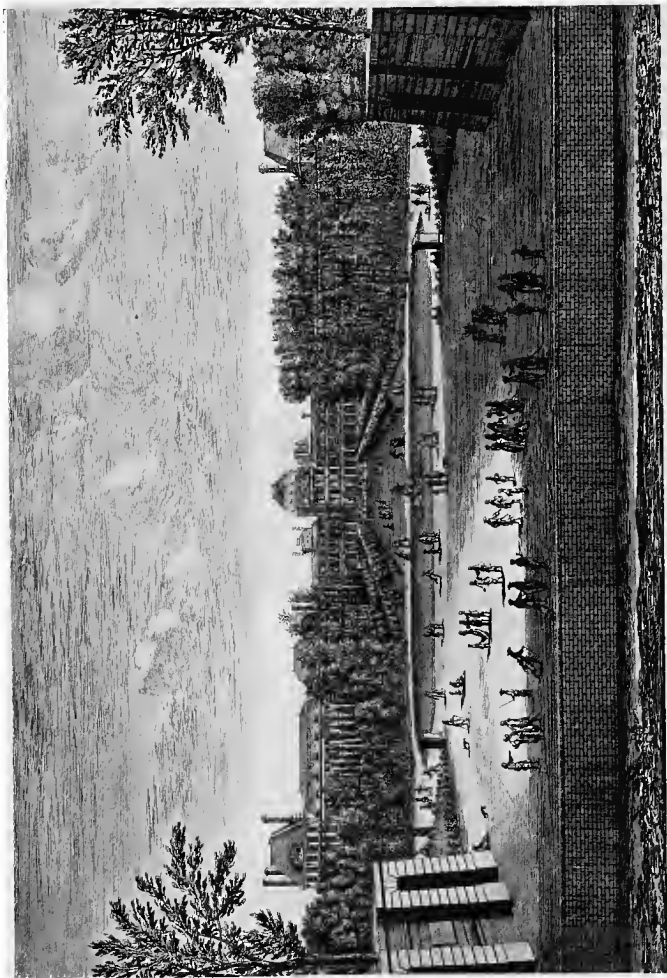
¹ Louvois to Saint-Mars, November 28, 1679.

Robinson Crusoe, leaving his island, was not more of a stranger to the course of events than a state prisoner after years of life in a dungeon. Fouquet had believed in listening to Lauzun that he was mentally deranged. When it was the fate of the latter to again come in contact with ordinary life, he found much difficulty in placing himself in the current. The history of France had been lengthened by a chapter while he was raging in his dungeon. The intimate story of Court life, the most important for an ancient favourite desirous of regaining a foothold, would have filled a volume with its tragi-comic complications. At first glance, the chapter of national history was dazzling. The war with Holland had given to France, Franche-Comté; to Louis XIV., a glory and power which had raised him in European opinion above all other sovereigns.

In the eyes of strangers, he was more than a king, he was *the* King, the incarnation of the monarchical idea, the Prince who had made France the mistress of the civilised world.

Never, in modern Europe [says a German historian¹ who always considers the interests of France as opposed to those of Germany] has there been a development of military power over land and sea, for attack and defence, so extraordinary as that to which France had attained during the war, and preserved during the ensuing peace; never before had a single will exercised so extended a command over troops so well trained and yet so submissive.

¹ Leopold von Ranke, *Histoire de France*.



VIEW OF THE PALACE AND GARDENS OF THE TUILERIES

From an engraving by Israel Silvestre, 1673

France was admired and feared. "Louis XIV.," says Ranke again, "reduced several of the German princes individually, and the Empire at large, to a degree of abasement to which they had not fallen during centuries." Spain itself was menaced with the loss of its independence. Europe recognised that in "the history of the world there were few periods in which civilisation had so rapidly advanced and literature was so brilliant as that under Louis XIV."

Such was France viewed from without, during the years which separated the peace of Nimèguen (1679) from the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685). This brilliant picture showed, however, some shadows; the vanquished guarded a deep resentment, and the former allies were detached without always being replaced by new ones; but the country considered itself sufficiently strong to support its isolation.

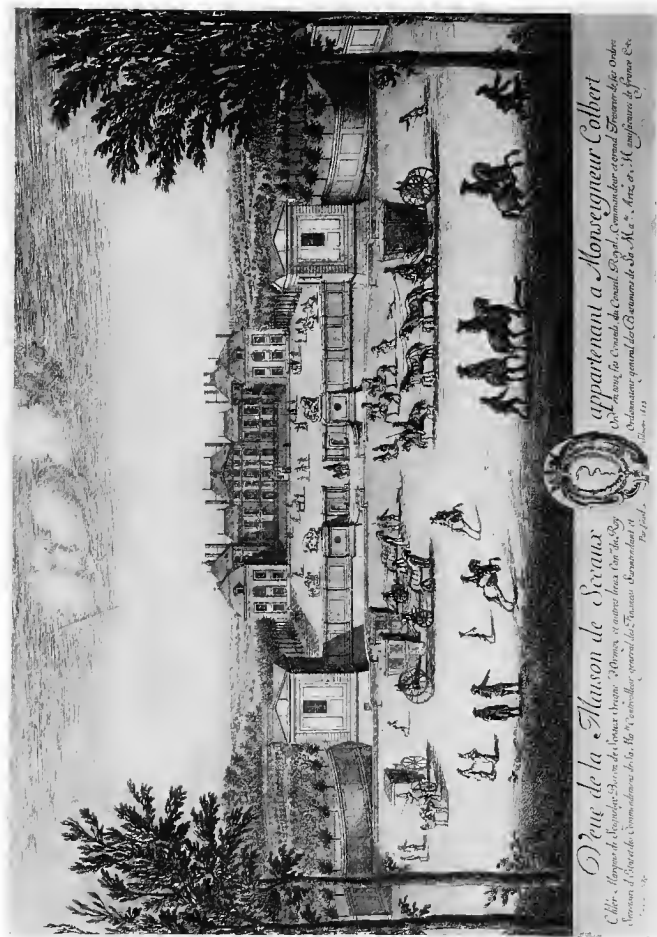
Seen from within, France presented to the superficial observer an appearance of prosperity. Upon a closer examination, however, it could be predicted that the lean years were approaching. Many provinces had fallen back into misery. There was a general discontent, the disaffection made rapid progress; the idea of centralised and absolute power, so well received at first, was beginning to pall upon the community. Four years after the death of Mazarin and the arrival to power of Louis XIV. keen-sighted men became anxious.

Olivier d'Ormesson, like all the world at first

under the influence of the charm of the young King, wrote in 1665 (March): "No one dares protest, although all suffer and have their hearts filled with despair; every one says that it is impossible for this state of things to last, the conduct of affairs being too unjust and violent."¹ Olivier d'Ormesson had personal griefs. He had been disgraced for having shown himself too independent at the time of the prosecution of Fouquet, and he was also one of those old politicians, liberal after their own fashion, who held firmly to the privileges belonging to their class, and who were not accustomed to see criticisms of the King punished more severely than blasphemies against the Deity. In 1668, a poor old man from Saint-Germain was accused "of having said that the King was a tyrant, and that there still existed some Ravallacs and people of courage and virtue." He was condemned to have his tongue cut out and to be sent to the galleys. "It is said," adds Ormesson, "that cutting out the tongue is a new punishment, and that it was formerly the custom simply to pierce the tongue of blasphemers." From the point of view of the times, the opinion of D'Ormesson is a little too advanced.

But the same criticism cannot be made of Colbert, then enjoying great favour and naturally a man of severity. In 1666 Colbert warned Louis XIV., in an almost brutal memorial, that through his extravagances he was leading France to ruin.

¹ *Journal d' Olivier Lefèvre d'Ormesson.*



VIEW OF THE RESIDENCE OF COLBERT, SHOWING ALSO HIS SEAL
From an engraving by Israel Silvestre, 1675

The memorial commenced by declaring that he (Colbert) did not wish stinginess where it was a matter concerning a good army or fleet, or in sustaining the suitable magnificence of his master in foreign lands, or in any useful expenditures, among which he included the proper representation of a great sovereign. He affirmed that in all these matters he would rather urge a certain lavishness, and this was the truth. But he could not share in the responsibility for the enormous leakage by which the public wealth was being exhausted, for the millions squandered in fantastic camps, in fêtes costing incredible sums,¹ and in insane gambling debts.²

The memorial mentions also pensions and other gratifications given out freely, and makes other specifications, of which one merits some details, for it is curious, but rarely referred to, and according to Colbert led to the most dangerous consequences. As will be understood, nothing other than actual war cost France so dearly under Louis XIV., as the monarch's passion for playing at soldier in the presence of beautiful ladies. This mania at first

¹ Two years after this warning Louis XIV. gave at Versailles, in honour of Mme. de Montespan, a fête for which special buildings were created. The ballroom, only used *one night*, was marble and porphyry; the rest in accordance.

² A loss of more than 100,000 crowns was not rare at the gaming table of the King. March 6, 1670, Mme. de Montespan lost 400,000 pistoles in one night; at eight in the morning she regained 500,000. The pistole is worth about ten francs. In 1682, three years after her disgrace, she lost at one time 700,000 crowns which she did not regain. The King paid her debts.

glance appears innocent enough, only rather childish.

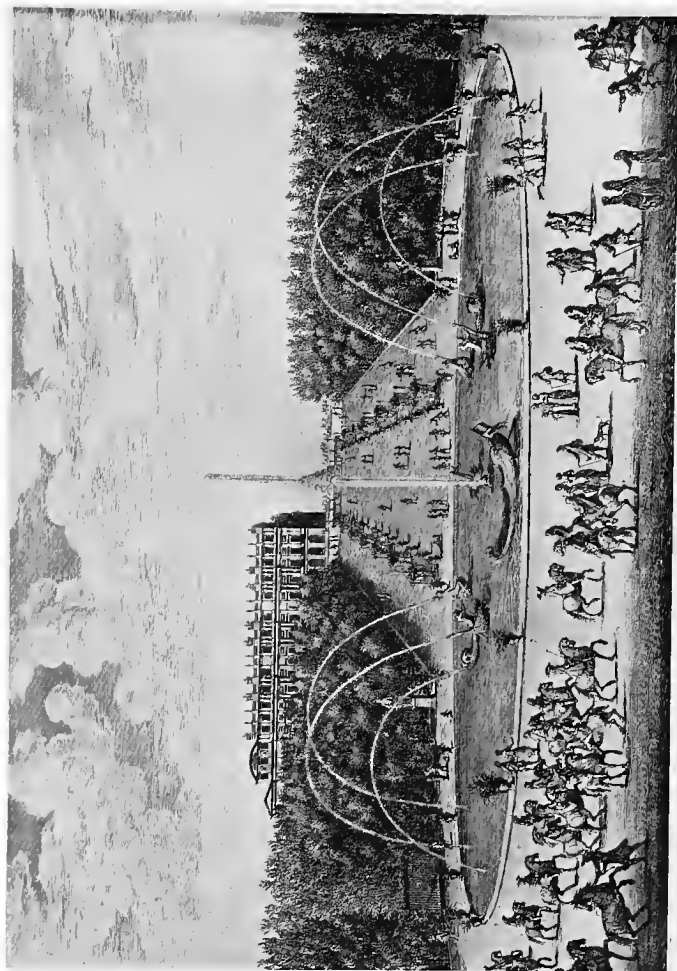
Colbert pointed out the inevitable effects. The King assembled armies to afford to the "*ladies*" the spectacle of a camp or the simulation of a siege, or the troops were reviewed in places agreeable for women, instead of awaiting him in their barracks.

The result was, that the perpetual marching of troops to and fro was causing the exhaustion of the provinces, for "it is sufficient to say that such a city or halting-place has suffered within six months a hundred different impositions of troops, and that there are but few places which have not been obliged to stand at least fifty."

The troops lived as they liked, entering and departing from their various lodging-places. "It can be affirmed distinctly that these places were left in a condition to which they would have been brought by a long war." If the King knew "how many peasants of Champagne, and the other provinces lying near the frontier, are passing and arranging to pass to other countries," he would comprehend that this state of affairs could not last.

The most delicate reproof was yet to be made, and Colbert approached it courageously. Serious ridicule had fallen upon the great monarch for these fantastic games for the benefit of his "*ladies*," not only with the French, but also among foreigners only too ready to seize an occasion for unfriendly comment.

Louis had just installed a camp at Moret, motley



VIEW OF THE CHÂTEAU OF VERSAILLES, SHOWING THE FOUNTAIN OF THE DRAGON

From an engraving by Israel Silvestre, 1676

and smart, with pretty tents for the Amazons. "It is said," wrote D'Ormesson, "that the siege of Moret will be made in due form, in order to show the '*ladies*' the method of taking places by assault. People in general, disgusted and annoyed, treat this review as childish trifling for a King, and it is badly thought of in foreign countries."

Olivier d'Ormesson did not display great merit in writing his comments in his journal for his eyes alone, but Colbert wrote for the King and had still many criticisms to add.

"It is further advisable for your Majesty to know two things which no one has before dared to report : one that there has been a poster in Paris, bearing the words *Louis XIV. will give an exhibition of Marionettes in the plain at Moret*; the other, the publication of a libel, still more bitter, upon the distinguished deeds of the fantastic captains." The King read the memorial and reread it in the presence of Colbert, but the following year saw a new camp, in which the royal tent, composed of six sumptuous rooms, "was filled with cavaliers gorgeously attired, and better fitted to attract the enemy than to make him flee."¹ Colbert did not succeed, even in time of war, in preventing a single trip to the frontier with a long train of women in rare apparel, and mistresses for whose accommodation it was necessary to put masons at work at every halting-place.

¹ Letter of Mme. de Châtrier, attached to the House of Condé; *De La Vallière à Montespán*, by Jean Lemoine and André Lichtenberger.

From Louvois, March 7, 1671 :

"Arrange chamber marked V for Mme. de Montespan, opening a door in the place marked 1. . . . Mme. de La Vallière will lodge in the chamber marked Y, in which a door must be made in the place marked 3N. . . ." The expense of the numerous doors, with many others equally irregular, entered into the budget of the Minister of War.

How was it possible to keep the budget accounts? How reduce unnecessary expenses? Colbert himself was obliged in his budget of the Marine to give space to the "*ladies*." In 1678, Mme. de Montespan conceived the fantasy of fitting out a privateer, a vessel belonging to the King, be it understood, manned with the royal sailors. Some weeks later, a second and third vessel were sent out in the same manner as privateers, always at the King's expense, "by Mme. de Montespan and the Comtesse de Soissons."¹ Including everything, the taste of Louis XIV. for conversation and the society of women, without mentioning the rest of his follies, probably cost France more than all the buildings erected by the Grand Monarch, but the one outlay can be calculated, and the other not.

The large expenses of Versailles and of Marly are often alluded to, while the unfortunate peasants, who fled across the frontier after every military spectacle offered to the "*ladies*," are forgotten. Louis XIV. was incapable of keeping accounts ;

¹ Letter from Colbert to the Intendant de Rochefort (April 16, 1678).



DUCHESSE DE LA VALLIÈRE AND HER CHILDREN

From the painting by P. Mignard in the possession of the Marquise d'Oilliamson

that is his sole excuse. It is strange, however, that a man so methodical, having a mind so steady, so well regulated, had never been able to comprehend that figures are figures, and that no one is able to make two crowns out of one. Colbert never succeeded in controlling the waste of his master, even in cases when the added profusion in no way increased the pleasure, and appears to us as a mere barbarous lavishness.

It is known that in the seventeenth century the repasts were abundant. Those of Louis XIV. were excessively so. In 1664, the King, having invited the Pope's legate to dine with him *tête-à-tête*, those in attendance counted the dishes; there were eighty, not including thirty-eight for dessert. This was certainly excessive, and Colbert had said in the Memorial of 1660, "I declare to your Majesty . . . that a useless meal, costing a thousand crowns, gives me an incredible pain."

But the lavishness of fifteen years later was far greater. On January 16, 1680, the King married Mlle. de Blois, his daughter by La Vallière, to Prince Louis-Armand de Conti, nephew of the great Condé. "The wedding festival was royal," wrote Bussy-Rabutin; "there were seven hundred dishes on a single table, served in five courses, that is to say, one hundred and forty dishes to each course." Mme. de Sévigné points the moral. "The young husband was ill the entire night. It would be a temptation to say 'Well deserved!'"

If, from the incensed and suffering people, the

attention is turned towards the Court, the difference between without and within is perhaps as clearly marked, although more difficult to define. Without, there is splendour, adulations given and received ; within, a profound moral misery ; with some, debauch and poverty ; with others, discouragement and bitterness. Mme. de Sévigné, in a letter of 1680, has unconsciously painted, in six lines, the state of degradation to which the King had systematically reduced the nobility of France, lined up, as it were, to catch purses thrown to them January 12 : " The King is enormously liberal in truth ; it is not needful to despair ; one may not be a valet, but in making one's court, something may fall upon one's head. What is certain is that far from him [the King], all seems valueless ; formerly it was otherwise."

If souls were debased under Louis, he must be held in large part responsible. The same can be said in regard to the deterioration of manners and morals. France, before the time of Louis XIV., was accustomed enough to both mistresses and bastards, but not to the prerogatives of second wives conferred on the first, nor the legitimatising of adulteries which encouraged his subjects to consider no longer seriously either law or morality. The example of the master ended in deadening consciences already somewhat feeble, and husbands might be seen encouraging their wives, the mothers of their daughters, to imitate La Vallière and de Montespan.

Louis had been in some degree punished for



LOUISE DE LA VALLIÈRE, IN THE GARB OF THE ORDER OF THE CARMELITES
After the painting by D. Plaats

having played sultan. Polygamy cannot exist without some discomfort, in a land in which women have any position. Few men, even upon the stage, have had so many quarrels with their mistresses, quarrels often violent, humiliating, as well as painful, as this majestic monarch, before whom the universe trembled. Royalty does not exist before a jealous mistress, and Louis XIV. was faithful only to one, Mme. de Maintenon.

The young King had been spoiled by Louise de La Vallière, who was gentleness itself, and whom love inclined to pardon all. None of the other mistresses really loved Louis, except perhaps Marie Mancini. Louis did not really please women; it was only the King for whose favour they disputed.

Mlle. de La Vallière had entered the Carmelite convent in 1674. Left alone upon the "breach," Mme. de Montespan defended the situation like a lioness. She was naturally sharp-tempered, and her fits of anger were often ungovernable,¹ as witnesses say, and Louis did not possess the force which innocence alone gives. Among the rivals who contended with Mme. de Montespan, many, in spite of her efforts, succeeded in enjoying their year, or at least their day. When she became enraged, and the King was forced to bend his neck under the tempest, "she often scolded him and he did not assert himself."² This was his method of expiation. The ephemeral reign of Mlle. de

¹ *Mémoires de la Fare.*

² *Mémoires de Mlle. de Montpensier.*

Fontanges came. She also was passionate, and she treated the King with "more authority than the others."¹ Louis called Mme. de Maintenon to his aid, and charged her to appease these furies. Stormy scenes began to weary him.

It had been remarked since 1675 that Louis aspired to moments of "repose and of liberty." Mme. de Montespan, with all her intelligence, could not comprehend that there comes a time of life at which men can no longer live in the midst of tempests, and this error was the cause of her ruin.

The King acquired the habit of fleeing for refuge to Mme. de Maintenon, where he found an atmosphere of peace and enjoyed refreshing conversation.

It was the first time that an intelligent woman had spoken seriously to him, without seeking to attract a declaration of love, nor to divert him with trifles, but to distract him agreeably from his work, and also to make him reflect upon certain subjects which did not always appeal to him. For example, what the sinner who had taken the wife of another might expect in the next world. She recalled to him the fact that there was a police in heaven as in the palaces of the King of France, and she asked him: "What would you say if some one should tell your Majesty that one of the musketeers you love had seduced a married woman, and that this woman was actually living with him? I am certain that before evening this man would depart from

¹ *Mémoires de l'Abbé de Choisy.*



FRANÇOISE D'ABBIGNY Marquise de Maintenon
Née le 26. Novembre 1685. Décédée le 10. Avril 1710.

MADAME DE MAINTENON
After the painting by P. Mignard in 1694

the palace, never to return, however late it might be."¹

The King laughed. He had never been more in love with Mme. de Montespan,—this happened in 1675, before the Jubilee, which separated them three or four months,—but he was not vexed with Mme. de Maintenon; already he "could not live without her."² One may or may not feel sympathy with this last, but it is certain that without her, without the empire that she knew how to gain over a prince ardent for pleasure, but by no means a veritable libertine, Louis XIV. might have ended shamefully. To every one their deserts. The Queen Marie-Thérèse was right in according her friendship to Mme. de Maintenon, who secured for her, somewhat late it is true, a certain consideration and some affectionate demonstration to which the poor Queen was not accustomed.

When the King had passed forty, tranquillity became a need. He believed he had assured it by giving to Mme. de Montespan her official dismissal as the recognised mistress. The date of this event is known. March 29, 1679, the Comtesse de Soissons was prayed to yield to the ancient favourite her charge as superintendent of the palace of the Queen, a position which afforded a kind of regulated retreat. The next day, Mme. de Montespan wrote to the Duc de Noailles to announce to him this arrangement, and she added: "Truly this is

¹ *Souvenirs sur Mme. de Maintenon.—Les Cahiers de Mlle. d'Aumale*, with an introduction by M. G. Hanotaux.

² *Ibid.*

very bearable. The King only comes into my room after mass and after supper. It is much better to see each other rarely with pleasure than often with boredom." The world was not deceived : "I really believe," wrote Bussy (April 11th), "that the King, just as he is, has given this position for past favours."

From Mme. de Scudéry to Bussy, October 29, 1679 : "A diversion has been established for Mme. de Montespan for this winter, and provided that she can do without love, she will retain the consideration of the King. This is all that an honest man can do when he ceases to love." Bussy responded, November 4th : "If Mme. de Montespan is wise she will dream only of cards and will leave the King in peace on the subject of love ; for it is impossible through complaints and scoldings to lure back unfaithful lovers."

Mme. de Montespan was *not* wise. In the hope of bringing the King back to her arms by force, she redoubled the disagreeable scenes. At this moment, an obscure past, filled with vague and frightful events, rose against her, and the expiation for having too much loved became almost tragic in its character.

La Voisin, the poisoner, cannot be forgotten, nor the prosecution in 1668, which had revealed to the young King the connection of his new mistress with the world of malefactors. This affair was stifled, but the evil continued in its subterranean influence. The merchants of love philters

and of poisons and the priests of satanic rites saw their clients increasing in number year by year. When the crimes finally came to the surface, and Louis established (March 7, 1679) the "*Chambre ardente*" to purify France from the gangrene, so many Parisians were connected in one way or another with the accused that the King had against him a powerful current of opinion. This is, perhaps, the most significant feature of the sad affair. Instead of being crushed with shame in learning how many were compromised, the higher classes were indignant against the equal justice which refused to give them special consideration. They murmured loudly, and for once the people were with them, for the populace remained staunch to the sorcerers. The clamours were so menacing that the judges of the "*Chambre ardente*" felt themselves in danger: "I know," wrote Bussy-Rabutin on April 1st, "the chamber instituted to examine the 'corrupters,' and also know that Messieurs de Bezons and de La Reynie do not pass from Paris to Vincennes without an escort of the King's Guards."¹ Louis XIV. was obliged several times to strengthen the resolution of these judges; sometimes in openly commanding them to "judge truly"² without any distinction of person, condition,

¹ Letter to the Marquis de Trichateau.

² Note by La Reynie (December 27, 1679). The documents of the *Affaire des poisons* form more than 1300 pages of the *Archives de la Bastille*, and they are not complete. Certain especial depositions, particularly compromising for Mme. de Montespan, are lacking, and were probably burned by order of Louis XIV.

or sex; sometimes by assuring them through official letter of his "protection."¹

The first executions before the *Chambre ardente* took place in February, 1679, and the list of the names of those arrested or of those to whom notices of warrants to appear as witnesses had been served, a list which made so great an excitement on account of the aristocrats included,² is dated January 23, 1680. It had been at least four months before,³ that there had come to the ears of the King, as some one was reading to him the account of the last examinations, two familiar names. Who is Mlle. des Œilletts, ancient "follower" of Mme. de Montespan? Who is Cato, her maid, and what had they to do with La Voisin and with those like her? These same names again appearing in the list of January 6, 1680, the King, while declaring that the witnesses must certainly have lied,⁴ ordered the Procurer-General, M. Robert, "to pay strict attention to this particular case."

This was done, with the result that Louis was forced to ask himself if the woman whom he adored above all others, and who had borne him seven child-

¹ Louvois to Boucherat, President of the *Chambre*, February 4, 1680.

² It included the Comtesse de Soissons, the Marquise d'Alluye (the King saved both), the Duc de Luxembourg (victim of an error), the Vicomtesse de Polignac, the Marquis de Feuquières, the Princesse de Tingry, the Maréchale de la Ferté, the Duchesse de Bouillon, etc.

³ Cf. *Archives de la Bastille*, the "Note autographe" of La Reynie, dated September 17, 1679. Was this the first time that these names had appeared? The destruction of portions of the testimony through the orders of the King does not permit the real truth to be disclosed.

⁴ Louvois to M. Robert, January 15, 1680.

ren, was a vile "corrupter"; if this perfect body for which he had risked the safety of his soul had taken part in the ignoble ceremonies of the infamous Guibourg? If, discontented with the thought of sharing his favours with rivals, she might not in an access of jealousy have tried to poison him, the King? He sought the truth, but did not find it. In waiting further developments, Louis led his mistress with him wherever he might go, and she was always making a disturbance of some sort. The King grew less patient; that was the only difference.

From Bussy-Rabutin, May 18, 1680:

"The King . . . as he was mounting into his carriage with the Queen had some rough words with Mme. de Montespan, about the scents with which she deluged herself, which made his Majesty ill. The King at first spoke politely, but as she responded sharply, his Majesty grew warm." On the 25th, Mme. de Sévigné noted another "serious embroilment." This time Colbert succeeded in reconciling them. The situation grew painful. A long series of letters and *mémoires* have been found in which La Reynie discusses for the King the charges accumulated against Mme. de Montespan. The picture is given of the doubts and fluctuations of an honest man whose responsibilities somewhat rankle in his breast, and who sees an equal peril in dishonouring the throne and in permitting a guilty woman to remain near the King. Louis passed through many successive stages of conviction

during the prosecution. The further the examination proceeded, the stronger became the presumption of guilt, without, however, bringing positive proofs.

On July 12, 1680, La Reynie summed up for his master the history of the "petition to be used in poisoning the King." On October 11th he declared that he should be ruined in the affair, and supplicated his Majesty to reflect whether it would be for the "welfare of the State," to make these "horrors" public. In the month of May following, he avowed that he had erred on some points and that there was more evil than at first appeared. The marvellous control that Louis possessed over himself prevented outward betrayal ; but certainly these uncertainties, these inferior conflicts, and it is to be hoped some sense of shame and remorse, became chastisements for his faults. On her side, Mme. de Montespan, in spite of the secret of her possible guilt being well guarded both at Court and by the judges and police, could not be ignorant that Mlle. des Œilletts had been interrogated, confronted with witnesses, and imprisoned for life in the general Hospital at Tours.¹ Mme. de Montespan then knew that she had been denounced, but with what proof? What did the King think? What curious meetings between these two beings must have taken place. What conversations during which the King and his mistress were closely observing each other.

¹ She died there September 8, 1686. Cato seems to have been dismissed, although she had been placed with Mme. de Montespan by La Voisin.

Court life, nevertheless, pursued its monotonous course, and Mme. de Montespan continued to figure in positions of honour. In March, 1680, she goes to meet the Dauphin¹ with the rest of the Court, and it is she who has charge of the choice and arrangement of the wedding presents, "being the woman in the world," wrote Mademoiselle, "who knows the best forms." In July, the King led her to Versailles with her sister, Mme. de Thianges, and her niece, the beautiful Duchesse de Nevers. This lady the mother and aunt were cynically offering to the Monarch.² In February, 1681, "a lottery was opened at Mme. de Montespan's, of which the largest prize was one hundred thousand francs, and there were a hundred others offered of one hundred pistoles each." In July, 1682, the *Chambre ardente* was suddenly suppressed. Of the three hundred accused, thirty-six people of no importance had been executed, one hundred sent to the galleys, or to prisons, or convents, or exiled; the noted among them always gaining some concessions. The dungeons of Paris and Vincennes were crowded. The smaller fry were released, and the remainder were scattered, without any other trial, through the provincial prisons, to await a death rarely slow in coming to relieve their misery.

From Louvois to M. de Chauvelin, Intendant,

¹ Marie-Anne-Christine de Bavière, coming to marry the Grand Dauphin.

² Cf. *Les souvenirs de Mme. de Caylus* and—among others—the letter of Mme. de Sévigné dated July 17, 1680.

December 16, 1682, announcing the arrival of one of these convoys :

Above all, please take care to prevent any of these gentlemen from proclaiming aloud, a thing which has already occurred, any of the absurd statements connected with Mme. de Montespan, which have been proved to be absolutely without foundation. Threaten a punishment so severe at the first utterance that they will not dare to breathe a word further.

This letter ended the connection of Mme. de Montespan with the affair of the "corrupters of morals" or the poisoners. She was saved, but was this due to proofs of innocence or to reasons of State, to the refusal of Louis to credit the testimony of an Abbé Guibourg or Lesage, or to the remnants of an old tenderness? The few men with whom it had been necessary to share the secrets which would respond to these questions were so perfectly mute that contemporaries suspected nothing. They saw the ancient favourite a little neglected, but always dreaming of the possibility of reasserting herself, as the many pages of the *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle testify. All this was in the natural course of events.

One single indication of what Louis XIV. thought at the bottom of his soul is possessed ; a letter from the King to Colbert, who knew all. Mademoiselle had prayed Mme. de Montespan to solicit some favour for Lauzun. The King charged Colbert to reply for him (October, 1681) : " You will politely explain to her that I always receive the marks of her friendship and confidence with pleasure, and that

I am very vexed when it is not possible to do what she desires, but at this time I can do no more than I have already done.”¹ Did he believe the mistress innocent or had he pardoned her?

The first preoccupation of Lauzun, in returning to the world, must have been to make clear to himself through legitimate or illegitimate means the chronology of the King's love affairs, a history so essential for the comprehension of the interior life of the Court.

The main facts for this record have been already given in the preceding chapter. The returned prisoner had afterwards to learn all that Mademoiselle had accomplished for him during his captivity, and of what the public thought of her efforts, and he recognised that no one in France except Segrais doubted the fact of their marriage. That the marriage had taken place before his imprisonment was the prevalent belief, which was never really shaken. It again came to light in the eighteenth century. The historian Anquetil saw at Tréport, in 1744, an old person of more than seventy years of age, who resembled the portraits of the Grande Mademoiselle and did not know from whence came her pension.² This person believed herself to be the daughter of the Duchesse de Montpensier, and local tradition confirmed this conviction. There were, however, no absolute proofs, and it will be seen further on how this question of the marriage with

¹ *Mme. de Montespan et Louis XIV.*

² *Louis XIV., sa Cour et le Régent*, by Anquetil (Paris, 1789).

Lauzun is brought up over and over again in the biography of the Grande Mademoiselle, with a monotony slightly fatiguing and without it being possible to ever obtain a clear response.

Whatever the fact may be, the Princess gave a very fine example of constancy and fidelity. She lived for ten years absorbed in a single thought. The *Mémoires* for the year 1673 say: "I remember nothing which has taken place during the past winter. My grief occupies me so much that I have but little interest in the actions of others." To liberate Lauzun had become a fixed idea, and she attached herself to the steps of the King and to those of Mme. de Montespan, without permitting herself to remember the ill that they had committed, as it was they alone who could loosen the bonds. The more they showed themselves inexorable, the more Mademoiselle redoubled her assiduities. In 1676 she enjoyed for the brief space of two hours the delusion that Louis XIV. at length, at the end of ten years, was moved with a feeling of compassion. The news of the attempted escape of Lauzun had just been received. "I learned that the King had listened to the account with some sign of humanity, I can hardly say of pity. If he had felt this, would he [Lauzun] still be there?"

The Princess wrote to the King, but received no response; and again four years rolled by. Mme. de Montespan was no longer favourite. The courtiers considered it shrewd to neglect her. Better inspired, Mademoiselle continued to stand fast by

her, and the result proved the wisdom of this course, in the dramatic moment, for Louis, of the affair of the corrupters. It was in the spring of 1680, while denunciations were falling upon the fallen favourite as upon all those connected with La Voisin, that Mademoiselle remarked by certain movements and a change of tone that something was stirring between Mme. de Montespan and the fortress of Pignerol :

I went to her daily and she appeared touched by the thought of M. de Lauzun. . . . She often said to me: "But think how you can make yourself agreeable to the King, that he may accord to you what you desire so dearly." She threw out such suggestions from time to time, which advised me that they were thinking of my fortune.

The phrase of a friend came back to her: "But you should let them hope that you will make M. de Maine your heir." She recalled other hints which at first had passed unnoticed, and understood that a bargain was offered.

The monarch and his ancient favourite had agreed between them to sell to Mademoiselle the freedom of the man she loved so deeply. What was to be the price? This was not yet disclosed. It was some time before Mademoiselle comprehended, and then she was so disconcerted that she said nothing. She felt that the combat was not an equal one between herself, from whom passion had taken away all judgment, and Mme. de Montespan, who was perfectly calm, and she hesitated, fearing some snare: "Finally, I resolved to make

M. de Maine my heir, provided that the King would send for Lauzun and consent that I should marry him." Some third person brought these conditions to Mme. de Montespan and was received with open arms. Louis XIV. thanked his cousin graciously without making any allusion to the condition; he could always assert that he had made no promise.

Mademoiselle wished that he would at least give her some news of Lauzun. Mme. de Montespan responded to her insistence: "It is necessary to have patience," and affairs remained at this point.

At the end of some weeks, Mademoiselle perceived that she was no longer free. She had counted upon taking her time and having sureties before proceeding further. An immediate execution of the deed of gift was insisted upon, and she was so harassed that she no longer felt at liberty to breathe freely.

"The King must not be played with," declared Mme. de Montespan; "when a promise is made it must be kept." "But," objected Mademoiselle, "I wish the freedom of M. de Lauzun, and suppose that after what I have done I should find myself deceived, and my friend should not be liberated?" Louvois was then sent to frighten her, or Colbert in order to compass some concession. It was no longer a matter of testament.

A donation while living¹ was exacted, of the Principality of Dombes and of the Comté of Eu

¹ The gift to be enjoyed only after the death of Mademoiselle.

without reference to the rest, and this assignment was obtained, in spite of complaints and the bitterest tears; "for they were demanding precisely what had been given to Lauzun, and Mademoiselle could not without difficulty resolve to despoil her lover." She finally comprehended that the King would not cease persecuting her until she consented, and, feeling no hope of diminishing the demands,¹ she yielded.

The gift to the Duc de Maine was signed February 2, 1681. It gave some agreeable days to Mademoiselle. The King assured her of his gratitude. "At supper he regarded me pleasantly and conversed with me; this was most charming." Nevertheless, Lauzun did not appear. One day Mme. de Montespan informed the Princess that the King would never permit Lauzun to be Duc de Montpensier, and that it would be necessary to have a secret marriage. The Princess cried out: "What! Madame, I am to permit him to live with me as my husband with no marriage ceremony! Of what will the world think me capable?"

This passage in the *Mémoires* apparently fixes the date of marriage after the return of Lauzun from his captivity. There exist, however, a number of moral proofs against this later date.

Some time after this conversation, in the beginning of April, 1681, the Court being at Saint-Germain, Mme. de Montespan announced to Mademoiselle the immediate departure of Lauzun

¹ *Mémoires de Saint-Simon.*

for the Baths of Bourbon, and she then drew her, slightly against her will, to the end of the terrace, far from indiscreet ears. "When we were in the Val, which is a garden at the end of the Park of Saint-Germain, she said to me, 'The King has asked me to tell you that he does not wish you to dream of ever marrying M. de Lauzun, at least, officially.'"

Mademoiselle had been tricked.

"Upon this, I began to weep and to talk about the gifts I had made, only on the one condition. Mme. de Montespan said, 'I have promised nothing.' She had gained what she wished, and was willing enough to bear anything I might say." In the evening it was necessary to assume a delighted air and thank the King for Lauzun's freedom; a single sign of ill-humour and Mademoiselle ran the risk of receiving nothing in exchange for her millions.

There remained the task of forcing Lauzun to renounce the gifts formerly presented to him. Mme. de Montespan took the route to Bourbon, where "she found greater difficulty than she had anticipated." Her demands so surpassed the expectations of the late prisoner that he revolted. There were many disputes, many despatches, and many delays,¹ at the end of which the obstinate one, having been reimprisoned,² was so harassed with threats and promises that he finally yielded. His signature was given; he believed himself free. Instead of liberty, he received an order of exile to Amboise.

¹ Saint-Simon, *Ecrits inédits*.

² At Chalon-sur-Saône.

He also had been duped. This affair is odious from beginning to end.

Mademoiselle was Lauzun's resource and providence. She compensated him as far as might be with a fresh devotion, in which Saint-Fargeau figured as an item, and found means to pay him nearly 300,000 francs ¹ over what the King would have been obliged to give him if he had not been sent to Pignerol. With much difficulty, the importunities of Mademoiselle obtained the desired permission for the ex-prisoner to salute the King and afterward to dwell where it pleased him, on the single condition that he would not approach the Court. Access to this was strictly forbidden ; but what would it have mattered, when he would have humbled himself before his master ?

Alas ! the charm was broken, and for ever. In March, 1682, at the single interview granted, Lauzun threw himself ten times, consecutively, at the feet of Louis XIV.—the King himself relates this—and employed all his grace, all his flatteries, without succeeding in breaking the ice.

Received coolly and dismissed without delay, there was nothing left but to fall back upon Mademoiselle. They had not yet met, and it is a terrible test of devotion to meet after eleven years, and to endeavour to again open the page closed by misfortune. The Grande Mademoiselle of the time previous to the imprisonment at Pignerol singularly resembled the Hermione of Racine, in

¹ Exactly, according to the official figures, 284,940 francs.

her jealousy and violence. The one of 1682 was not yet a tranquil person, but Hermione was an old woman, and Pyrrhus a licentious greybeard, who was endeavouring to recompense himself for the time lost in prison.

Years had not made Lauzun in love with his benefactress, and he arrived to meet her well resolved to finish simply with expressions of gratitude and of love. Mademoiselle was well aware of his infidelities. The grief, mingled with irritation, which she felt displayed itself in a sort of stiffness and embarrassment. The great joy she had anticipated in again seeing her lover, she did not realise.

She had existed ten long years for this moment, and when it came, she desired to escape. She went to await Lauzun at Mme. de Montespan's, a first piece of absurdity. "M. de Lauzun," say her *Mémoires*, "arrived after his interview with the King; he wore an old undress uniform with short waistcoat, almost in rags, and a very ugly wig.¹ He sank at my feet with much grace. Then Mme. de Montespan led us into a cabinet, and said, 'You will be glad to speak together.' She then went away, and I followed her." A second ridiculous action! Lauzun profited by the delay to salute the rest of the royal family. On returning, he

¹ The coat called a *brevet*, because it could only be worn with a *brevet* from the King, was changed every year. It was thus very out of fashion at the end of twelve years. Lauzun had worn a wig at Pignerol, to protect his head against the dampness of his dungeon.

found his Princess with Mme. de Montespan and did not see her an instant alone : " He told me that he had been cordially received, and that this he owed to me ; that I was his only source of good, the one from which he received all. He made certain amiable propositions, and in thus acting he was only wise. I was silent ; I was astonished."

This interview finished, Lauzun considered himself free from his obligations and returned to Paris with a peaceful conscience. Mademoiselle dared not follow him too quickly. The fourth day they were at Choisy, a new mansion that Mademoiselle had built two leagues from Sceaux. Lauzun regarded the Princess while she was having her head adorned with flame-coloured ribbons. " He said, ' I was astonished to see the Queen with many-coloured ribbons on her head.' ' You must find it wrong, then, that I should wear them, who am older ? ' He did not reply. I told him that rank permitted the decoration for a longer period." Mademoiselle had at first written, " People of my rank are always young," but had effaced the phrase. Lauzun knew well how to restore her to a good-humour, and he let himself be scolded, escaping towards evening to return to his pleasures.

The fifth day they again disputed. Lauzun was in the wrong ; he had spoken of his visits to Choisy as duties. Mademoiselle, however, injured her cause with sharpness. " I see clearly," said she, " that in this world people who do good are mocked, as they are bores." Lauzun, vexed,

demanded, "How much longer is this pleasantry to last?" "As long as I please; I have the right to say all I wish, and you are bound to listen." Lauzun showed "much impatience to depart," and this was not altogether unnatural, considering the nature of man. At another interview, it was the lover who was the first to show irritation. To be no longer of any importance in the world of society, to be two steps from the Court without being free to enter, this was more than he could bear. He accused Mademoiselle of having managed very badly and having only done harm; "if she had not interfered with his affairs," he would have come out of prison under better conditions. Mme. de Montespan overheard the accusation and was very indignant at this injustice and ingratitude, and the Princess united with her in reproaches. It would be difficult to find a clear moment in the midst of these frequent quarrels, in which the pair would have desired to marry, if they had not done so before Pignerol. Here is again a moral proof to add to the others.

About every two days, Lauzun became metamorphosed, and was again for some hours, or at least minutes, for Mademoiselle the former "little man" whose eccentricities gave an indescribable charm, difficult to explain, but impossible to deny. He had not the least trouble in again captivating his mistress. As soon as he assumed the sweet and submissive air and the enigmatical smile which she had so dearly loved (even combined with the

manners which she sometimes distrusted, "of being acquainted with everything without speaking or copying"), Mademoiselle fell anew under the charm and could refuse nothing. But this happy state of affairs never lasted. The time to obtain from her some new concession, another service, and the exaggerated manner of the convict dragging his chain reappeared. He loved to exasperate her jealousy. If nothing better offered, "he amused himself with grisettes,"¹ even after the royal family had received him as cousin "understood," if not avowed, and when all Paris was congratulating Mademoiselle on his happy release.

Other serious difficulties arose from the fact of Lauzun considering the money of Mademoiselle as his own. Choisy appeared to him a useless expense; he found much fault with its management. "The terraces cost immense sums," said he one day while walking in the grounds; "what good are they?" The Princess had sold in his absence a chain of pearls. "Where is the money?" demanded Lauzun. He wished to hold the purse strings, and no longer to be a "beggar." It astonished him that Mademoiselle had not thought of preparing for him, before his arrival, "a beautiful apartment," of organising his establishment, of placing one of her carriages at his disposal.

He complained openly in the social world that she left him without a penny; that she had only given him some diamonds, worth perhaps one thousand

¹ *Écrits inédits*, Saint-Simon.

pistoles in all—and what stones, so “ugly” !—and that he had immediately sold them to obtain means of “subsistence.” This is the perpetual complaint of the youthful husband, who wishes to be recompensed for the devotion lavished upon an elderly wife. The “beautiful apartment” existed and awaited him, but it was at the Château of Eu ; the King would not tolerate his presence at the Luxembourg.

Those who had the good fortune to visit Eu before the fire of 1902 will not have forgotten the flight of Loves on the ceiling of a chamber situated above that belonging to Mademoiselle. The Chamber of the Loves was the one designed for Lauzun, who failed, however, to honour the symbol. After a delay of three weeks, he no sooner arrived than he committed the unpardonable imprudence of running after the village girls, under the very eyes of Mademoiselle. This was too much. The mistress of the château beat Lauzun, scratched his face, and turned him out of doors. There he should stay. He was sufficiently shrewd to desire an accommodation. The Comtesse de Fiesque served as intermediary.

In the Château of Eu there was a long gallery filled with family portraits. Mademoiselle appeared at one end ; “he [Lauzun] was at the other, and he crept along on his knees the entire length of the gallery, till he reached the feet of Mademoiselle.”¹ Possibly they forgave each other sincerely,

¹ Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*. Saint-Simon takes his details from an eye-witness.

but when friction once exists between married couples it continues, whether in the palace of princes or in the huts of charcoal burners. Such scenes, more or less stormy, occurred again in the future. Lauzun grew weary of being beaten, and in his turn used force with the Princess, and this happened several times. In the end, disgusted with each other, they fought for the last time and separated, never to meet again.

The final quarrel is related in detail in the *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle. It happened in the spring of 1684. France was at war with Spain. On April 22d the King departed to join his army, refusing to permit Lauzun to accompany him, who imagined, rightly or wrongly, that Mademoiselle was responsible for the prohibition, and was indignant. He went to the Luxembourg, where a reception of raillery exasperated him still further :

I met him laughing, and said: "You must retire to Saint-Fargeau; you will be a laughing stock if you remain at Paris, as you were not permitted to go with the King, and I shall be very vexed if it is believed that it is I who have caused you to remain behind." He replied: "I am going away, and bid you farewell; I shall never see you again." I said: "It would have been better if we had never met; but better late than never." "You have ruined my career," replied he; "you might as well have cut my throat; it is your fault that I am not with the King; you asked him to leave me behind."

Oh, that is false; he will tell you so himself." Lauzun grew more and more angry, and I remained very calm. I said to him: "Adieu, then"; and I entered my boudoir. I remained there some time; on returning, I found him still there. The ladies present said: "Do you not wish to play cards?" I

approached him, saying : " This is too much ; keep your promise ; go away." He finally withdrew.

This rupture made a great scandal. Dangeau, who had followed the King to the frontier, noted on May 6th, in his journal : " The news comes from Paris that Mademoiselle has forbidden M. de Lauzun to appear again before her." Thus ends meanly and miserably, with a scene worthy of Dickens, the most famous passion of the century, after that of Chimène and Rodrigue. The first interest in the affair abated, the hero of the romance sank into obscurity. Mademoiselle cast herself into an ecstasy of pious devotion, from which the virtue of pardoning the offences of others was apparently excluded.

Lauzun sought some support to which to attach himself, and did not easily find it. He realised too late that one could not quarrel with impunity with a princess of the blood. He made attempts at reconciliation, which Mademoiselle repulsed ; she had loved with too much ardour not to be capable of furious hate. The career of both lovers appeared to be finished, when the fantastic star which had guided Lauzun towards so many adventures, marvellous if not always agreeable, led him to England during the autumn of 1688. He sought a more hospitable court, he found a revolution and glory. " I admire the star of M. de Lauzun," wrote Mme. de Sévigné, " which again brings its light over the horizon when it was supposed to be for ever extinguished " (December 24, 1688).

The name of Lauzun was actually again on the lips of all. He had saved the Queen of England and her son, and had brought them to Calais at great risk, and suddenly assumed the pose of a true hero, wrongly despised and persecuted. "It is long," at once said Louis, "since Lauzun has seen my writing. I believe that he will rejoice at receiving a letter from me." The royal missive bore to the former favourite more than the pardon for the past; it spoke of "impatience to see him again."¹ Mademoiselle considered this an outrage against herself; the ministers and courtiers, a menace. (December 27th): "He [Lauzun] has found the road again to Versailles by way of London; but he alone is joyful." The Princess is indignant at the thought that the King is again content with him, and that he can return to Court.²

In vain the King sent Seignelay to say to his cousin, as a sort of excuse and consolation: "After such services rendered by Lauzun, it is my duty to see him." Mademoiselle grew angry, and said, "This is then the gratitude I receive for having despoiled myself for the sake of the King's children." One of the friends of M. de Lauzun was charged to present her with a letter. She threw it into the fire unread.³ When it was realised that she was not to be appeased, people ceased to concern themselves with her and her bad temper. Lauzun re-entered in triumph the Court of France,

¹ Saint-Simon, *Écrits inédits*.

² Sévigné.

³ *Mémoires de la Cour de France*, by Mme. de La Fayette.

and Bussy-Rabutin, in a letter to Mme. de Sévigné,¹ summed up the record of his career (February 2, 1689): "We have seen him in favour, we have seen him submerged, and now behold he is again riding the waves. Do you remember a childish game in which one says, 'I have seen him alive, I have seen him dead, I have seen him alive after his death' ? This tells his history."

The "second volume of the romance" offers to those interested an account of the solemn conferring upon the little Lauzun, in the church of Notre Dame, by King James II., of the Order of the Garter. To this chapter succeeds one less brilliant. Lauzun received the appointment as commander of the French troops sent to Ireland to sustain the cause of legitimate monarchy. He lacked the necessary qualifications for this post. He astonished his officers with his incapacity, and made them blush by displaying "a longing to return to France,"² which was not heroic.

Louis XIV. consented to make Lauzun Duke, upon "the urgent prayer"³ of their Britannic Majesties, but his opinion once formed never changed. The King never again employed the new Duke in any official capacity, and this omission was always bitterly resented.

As a result of many years of reflection, Made-

¹ Sévigné, January 6, 1689.

² Letter of M. d' Amfreville, general-officer of the marine, to Seignelay, in the *Histoire de Louvois*, by Camille Rousset.

³ Saint-Simon, *Écrits inédits*.

moiselle at length arrived at the conviction, an accepted commonplace, that happiness is not for the prominent upon this earth. Without actually compensating her for her troubles, this discovery brought a certain consolation. She had, at this period, as neighbour in Normandy, a young and charming woman called the Comtesse de Bayard, who became in the following century the godmother of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, and who furnished her godson with material¹ afterwards woven into tales made charming by his delicately sentimental language. One of these tales by Saint-Pierre is founded upon the romance of the Grande Mademoiselle. Mme. de Bayard liked to recall how, in their lonely walks, the Princess would linger to make the villagers relate the tales of their loves and marriages; how her eyes would fill with tears, and how, returning into the Château of Eu, she would say that she would have been happier in a hut.

To tears succeeded a certain childishness; the execrable Court life had educated her only for a puerile old age, and she hastened to Versailles from time to time, fearing to miss a tournament or some spectacle of this kind. On March 15, 1693, she was seized at Paris with a disease of the bladder which rapidly increased in severity.² The

¹ *Œuvres complètes*, of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (Paris, 1830), vol. i.; *Essai sur la Vie* by Aimé-Martin.

² Cf. the *Gazette* for 1693, and the series of the *Mercurie Galant* monthly periodical, founded in 1672 by Donneau de Visé.

Luxembourg was besieged with seekers after news; the fear of losing the Grande Mademoiselle had aroused anew her popularity. Monsieur and Madame, who loved her, came to nurse her. Lauzun begged to be admitted, but was refused. The condition grew rapidly worse, and the physicians, not knowing what to do, administered five doses of an emetic, the fashionable remedy that winter for all diseases, with the result that she soon saw the mournful procession of the royal family defile around her bed, the sure sign that all hope had passed.

The Princess died on April 15th, at the age of sixty-six years, and was buried at Saint-Denis with much pomp. In the midst of the ceremony, an urn, in which through a curious arrangement the entrails were enclosed, "broke with a frightful noise and emitted a sudden and intolerable odour."¹ Some women fainted, while the rest of those present gained the open air by running. "All was soon perfumed and decorum was re-established," but this occurrence became the jest of Paris. It was fated that the Grande Mademoiselle should always arouse a little ridicule, even at her interment.

Lauzun went into deep mourning, and made, on the day of the funeral, an offer of marriage, to prove that he was really a widower. Having, on this occasion, been refused, he married (1695) the younger daughter of the Maréchal de Lorges and became the brother-in-law of Saint-Simon.

¹ Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.

Mme. de Lauzun was a child of fourteen,¹ to whom Lauzun, with his sixty-three years, appeared so old that she had accepted him in the expectation of being quickly a widow.

She flattered herself that at the end of "two or three years at most" ² she would find herself independent, rich, and, above all, a duchess, and this idea captivated her. But Lauzun could never be counted upon. His wife was obliged to endure him for nearly thirty years, passed in suffering torments from morning till night from the loving husband. The King had said to the Maréchal de Lorges, in learning of the marriage of his youngest daughter: "You are bold to take Lauzun into your family; I trust that you may not repent it." Repentance was prompt and bitter. Mademoiselle was right, it was impossible to live with Lauzun. It was through miracles of patience that his new wife bore to the end, and miracles should never be exacted in wedded life. The mean little calculation at the beginning had been amply expiated by the time that Mme. de Lauzun finally became a widow. Even to the end, Lauzun had remained one of the ornaments and curiosities of the Court of France, noted for his grand manner, the eccentricities of his habits, the splendour of his habitation, and for the indescribable elegance and ease of conversation and bearing, which at that time was not to be acquired at Versailles.

¹ Saint-Simon says fifteen. He is mistaken; the act of marriage says fourteen.

² *Mémoires*, Saint-Simon.

At ninety he himself drove, and sometimes with fiery animals. One day, when he was training a fresh colt in the Bois de Boulogne, the King, Louis XIV., passed. Lauzun executed before him a "hundred capers" and filled the spectators with admiration, by his "address, his strength, and his grace."¹ He still often enjoyed "pretty" moments. But there was a reverse side to the medal: the malignant dwarf "frightened all who approached him with his wicked wit and his hateful tricks." From afar, Lauzun is very amusing under this aspect; he excelled in buffoonery. In extreme age, he suffered from a malady which almost killed him. One day, when he was very ill, he perceived reflected in a mirror the forms of two of his heirs who entered the chamber on tiptoe, fancying themselves concealed behind the curtains, to ascertain with their own eyes how long they were to be forced to wait. Lauzun feigned to perceive nothing and began to pray in a loud voice as one who believes himself alone. He demanded pardon of God for his past life, and lamented that his time for repentance was so short. He exclaimed that there was only a single way to secure his safety, which was to devote the wealth which God had given him to paying for his sins, and this he engaged to do with all his heart. He promised to leave to the hospital all that he possessed, without abstracting a single penny. He made this declaration with so much fervour and with so penetrating an accent

¹ Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.

that his heirs fled away in despair, to relate the misfortune to Mme. de Lauzun. This scene properly terminates the career of this extraordinary personage, unscrupulous and malignant to the last. Lauzun died in 1723, at over ninety years of age.

Mademoiselle was the last to disappear of the grand figures belonging to the time of the Fronde. Retz, Condé, Turenne, La Rochefoucauld, Mme. de Chevreuse, Mme. de Longueville, had departed before her.

The only one of the ancient rebels which could not perish, the Hôtel de Ville of Paris, had been suppressed from history by royal ordinance for the period corresponding to the Fronde. The accounts of the prosecutions of the Council recorded the revolutionary sentiments which prevailed at the capital during the civil war. The King ordered all the registers¹ to be destroyed, and the destruction included every record relating to public affairs for the years 1646-1653.

It may be said without too much calumniating the heart of Louis XIV. that the death of his cousin afforded a certain relief. She was too lively a reminder of the execrable period which he did his best to banish from his own memory as well as from that of the public. Saint-Simon, newly arrived at the Court at the date of the death of

¹ The royal ordinance is dated July 7, 1668. Louis XIV. was ever ignorant of the fact that the councillors of the Hôtel de Ville had passed nights in copying what was to be burned, so that the documents supposed to be destroyed still exist.

Mademoiselle, had time to convince himself that she was in the eyes of the King always the unpardoned and unpardonable heroine of the combat of the Porte Saint-Antoine. "I heard him reproach his cousin once at supper, joking it is true, but a little roughly, for having turned the cannon of the Bastile upon his troops."

The royal rancour extended to the city of Paris, eternal cradle of French revolutions. Not being able to suppress the capital, Louis XIV. banished himself from its gates. On May 6, 1682, unfortunate date for the French monarchy, the Court installed itself definitely at Versailles, and henceforth left this place only for sojourns at the various country seats, as Fontainebleau and Marly. Paris was abandoned, left to do penance. Not only did Louis XIV. desert this city as a place of residence, but he visited it rarely. It was remarked that he often made long detours rather than to pass through Paris. The nobility and ministers followed the King to Versailles. Royalty and the capital turned their backs on each other.

Another important event influenced the ideas of Court decorum and propriety. The Queen Marie-Thérèse dying in 1683 (July 30), Louis XIV. in the course of the winter following formally married Mme. de Maintenon. The physiognomy of the Court, what Saint-Simon would have called the bark (*écorce*), entirely changed its character. At the moment of ending this long study it is, then, a different world to which adieu must be said from

the one which was found at the beginning, and the transformation did not end with the "bark." The principal cause of the change, the establishment of absolute monarchy, had acted violently upon France in shaking the nation to its depths, as do all changes not developing from national tradition.

Absolute monarchy was not a French tradition. It was an importation from Spain. Anne of Austria, who did not understand any other régime, had educated her son to accept her ideas and habits of thought, and the substitution of king for minister was, at the death of Mazarin, accomplished without shock. It was, however, a real *coup d'état*.

Before Louis XIV. the royal power, without being submitted to precise limitations, from time to time hurled itself against certain rights, themselves often loosely defined. There existed privileges of the Parliament, others of the State, together with those of the nobles, and others belonging to bodies and individuals, which when united left the King of France in a situation resembling that in which Gulliver found himself, when the Liliputians bound him with hundreds of minute threads. Each single thread was of no consequence; through the compression of all together every movement was paralysed. Louis XIV. resolutely broke the numerous threads which had trammelled the power of his predecessors. He freed himself in suppressing the ancient liberties of France. No student of history can be ignorant of the material results, so splendid at first, so disastrous in the end; but

certain moral consequences of his government have been perhaps less clearly remarked.

The French aristocracy ceased from the second generation to be a nursery for men of action. This was the result desired from the policy of keeping it chained to the steps of the throne. The end had been attained at the date of the King's death. Saint-Simon, who cannot be suspected of hostility towards the nobility, certifies to this. When the Duke arrived at power under the Regent, his brain swarming with projects for replacing the aristocrats in positions of importance, and when he sought great names with which to fill great posts, he realised that he was too late. The "nursery" was empty. The difficulty, say the *Mémoires*

lay in the ignorance, the frivolity, and the lack of application of a nobility which had been accustomed to lives of frivolity and uselessness ; a nobility that was good for nothing but to let itself be killed, and that reached the battlefield itself only through the force of heredity. For the remainder of the time, it was content to stagnate in an existence without a purpose. It had delivered itself over to idleness and felt keen disgust for all education, excepting that relating to military matters. The result was a general incapacity and unfitness for affairs.

It is proper to render to Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar. The effacement of the French aristocracy is not to be laid at the door of the great Revolution, which acted only upon an accomplished fact ; it was the personal work of Louis XIV.

The higher classes also, contrary to the generally

received opinion, suffered from a serious moral abasement. This fact is the more striking, as at no other period has France possessed so many elements for giving to life decorum and dignity. Through a deplorable misfortune, social groups which ought, through their solid principles, to have served as the support of public morality had incurred, one after the other, the serious displeasure of royalty. Among the Catholics, the disciples of Bérulle and of Vincent de Paul had compromised themselves in the affair of the *Compagnie du Saint Sacrement*. No government worthy of the name can suffer itself to be led by a secret society, whatever the purpose or character of such society may be. The Jansenists had shared with the reformers in the discontent that the least expression of a desire for independence, no matter in what domain, inspired in Louis XIV.

His distrust even reached the interior life of his subjects. Every one, under penalty of being considered a rebel, must feel and think like the King. This was with Louis a fixed idea, and during his reign gave a peculiar character to the religious persecutions. Jansenists and Protestants were pursued much oftener as enemies of the King than as enemies of God.

The hostility of the Prince to the three principal seats of the French conscience, and the destruction of two of these, left the field clear for the licentiousness which marked the end of the reign. Excessive dissipation is always supposed to belong particularly

to the time of the Regency, but the abscess had existed for a long time before the death of Louis XIV. caused it to break. A letter as early as 1680 states, "Our fathers were not more chaste than we are; but . . . now the vices are decorated and refined."¹ The evil had made rapid progress under the mantle of hypocrisy, which covered the Court of France from the time of the rule of Mme. de Maintenon. This last well perceived the danger and groaned over it to no purpose. Strangers were struck with the conditions. "All is more concentrated," wrote one of them in 1690, "more reserved, more restrained, than the peculiar genius of the nation can bear."²

The real misfortune was that Louis, who had been brought up and matured in an entirely formal religion, had permitted himself to be imposed upon by scoffers, who came disguised as believers, in order to make their court. The King, who had permitted the representation of *Tartuffe*, had not sufficiently meditated upon its import.

A final misdeed, and not the least for which the absolute régime is responsible, was the launching of the nation in pursuit of one of the most dangerous of political chimeras, that of the need of spiritual unity. Louis XIV. revoked the Edict of Nantes in the name of the fetich that a good Frenchman must be of his King's faith. A century later, the

¹ From La Rivière to Bussy-Rabutin.

² *Relation de la Cour de France*, by Ézéchiél Spanheim, envoy extraordinary from Brandenburg.

Terror cut off heads in the name of a unity of opinion, because a Frenchman ought to be virtuous in the fashion of Rousseau and of Robespierre. The reader may continue for himself the series, and count the acts of oppression committed in the nineteenth century, while even the twentieth century, young as it still is, presents examples of the attempt to enforce upon the nation a uniformity of thought which, if once attained, would signify intellectual death. For in politics, as in religion, as in art, in literature, in all, diversity is life.

It is through this capital error that the reign of Louis XIV., so glorious in many respects, was the precursor of the great Revolution and really made its coming inevitable. The Jacobins are in some measure the heirs of the great King. Fundamentally, the mania for spiritual and moral unity is simply, under a less odious name, the horror of liberty; a sentiment old as the world, but which in the earlier portion of the seventeenth century had been far from dominant. The word "liberty" occurs again and again in the writings of many people of that period, theorists, jurists, and great nobles, at every point in which they touch politics. The expression contained for them nothing revolutionary. What they were demanding was rather a return to past methods, and, above all, it did not enter their thoughts to associate with liberty the word "equality." It is the eighteenth century, more philosophical, if perhaps less reasonable, that first conceived the idea of uniting two really

incompatible things, without perceiving that one of the two was destined to annihilate the other.

If absolute royalty had remained at Paris, it would have clearly realised the point at which the nation no longer was in sympathy with its rule. At Versailles it saw nothing ; it shut itself up in its own tomb. The divorce was consummated between the Court and the Capital, one contenting itself with being figurative and ornamental, the other actively controlling opinions, since royalty had renounced the office of directing the public mind and thoughts.

It will be recollected that the rôle of universal arbitrator was played by the "young Court," the youthful King at its head, at the time in which there was daily contact with Paris, and when the Court was always in the advance in ideas as in fashions. The residence at Versailles ended the possibility of these times ever returning ; there was no longer any bond between the King of France and the merchant of the rue St. Denis. In consequence, Paris employed itself in the eighteenth century in the evolution of minds. The Court had decided upon the success of the plays of Molière, the Parisian parquet criticised those of Beaumarchais.

If it be considered that the interior politics of Louis XIV. were constantly dominated by a horror of the Fronde, it will be recognised that this abortive revolution brought in its train consequences almost as grave as if it had been successful. This is the reason it has seemed permissible to make the

history of the ideas and sentiments existing during the wars of the Fronde and the succeeding forty years circle around the incidents in the life of the Grande Mademoiselle. She was a truly representative figure of this generation, and on this account will always merit the attention of historians, and by a double claim, through the interest in her proud conception of life, and through the importance of the evil for which she was partly responsible and by the results of which she was herself overwhelmed. No one possessed in a higher degree than this Princess the great qualities belonging to her epoch, and no one preserved them so intact without thought of the danger after the retaining of such opinions had become a cause of disgrace.

Neither Retz nor the great Condé showed signs in their old age of their characteristics displayed under the Fronde ; both had become calmed. The Grande Mademoiselle remained always the Grande Mademoiselle, and this steadfastness, while sometimes a difficulty, was more often her real title to glory.



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